

TOWN OF ROCKPORT, MAINE  
*Comprehensive Plan*  
2004

*Draft: January 26, 2004*

*Rockport, Maine*

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2004

## BOOK I

The Comprehensive Plan consists of two books, plus an appendix, which contains resources, the community survey and its responses, photographs, and references.

Book I contains a summary, as well as detailed policies and recommendations to help guide Rockport in all aspects of its development over the next decade. Sections in Book I provide a brief background about each particular topic, followed by recommendations.

Book II contains an inventory and analyses of Rockport – its population and housing, local economy, financial resources, natural and marine resources, transportation, historic and cultural assets, recreational opportunities, and municipal assets. While some of the data is repeated in both books, it is the general intention that Book II contains a broad and yet detailed picture of the Town of Rockport, while Book I provides summary findings and recommendations.

This document was prepared in accordance with the Maine Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, its goals and criteria.

# BOOK I

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgments and Thanks .....	4
2004 Comprehensive Plan Summary .....	6
Implementation Priorities .....	10
Maine Growth Management Act Goals .....	12
Maine Coastal Management Act Goals .....	13

### FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE

Financial Programs .....	16
Government .....	30
Capital Improvement Program .....	35

### REGIONALIZATION

Rockport in the Region .....	39
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### THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY ..... 44

### LAND USE

Land Use .....	54
Agricultural and Forestry Resources .....	75
Natural Habitat .....	80
Water Resources .....	86
Marine Resources .....	90
Scenic Resources .....	95

### TRANSPORTATION..... 100

### PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Housing .....	116
Parks and Recreation .....	120
Rockport Public Library .....	125
Police and Fire Departments .....	129
Sewer and Water .....	132
Historic and Archeological Resources .....	135

### EDUCATION..... 140

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Peter Hall	Steve McAllister	Maynard Tolman

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Nancy Ninnis was our ever-mindful and extraordinary minute-taker, who always managed to set the facts straight when it came to discussions and debates about Rockport's complicated controversies. We are tremendously grateful to her for her diligence.

We especially acknowledge those comprehensive plan committee members who preceded this committee over the past 30 years. Some have passed on, but their care for the town has made Rockport a better place all around.

The Rockport Planning Board wrote the following in 1971 when its members produced the Rockport Town Plan, the first in a series of now four comprehensive plans:

"In the last two or three generations, the Town of Rockport has undergone a dramatic transition from a coastal industrial community to the community we know today. All that has transpired has been the result of a succession of events not strictly within the control of the citizens of the community. Happily, those events have produced the very beautiful community which now exists.

"In its unique setting on the Maine coast, Rockport must surely be the envy of many people living elsewhere. This planning policy document is an attempt to express clearly the kind of community that the citizens of Rockport wish to maintain. It is an attempt to answer the question, 'what kind of a community do we wish to have?'

"It is also an attempt to develop the terms under which future growth will occur, the basic purpose being to establish the highest possible standards or otherwise make it happen the way we want it to.

It is entirely within the grasp of the townspeople of Rockport to establish exactly the community they want rather than let it occur by chance."

*Rockport Planning Board, 1971  
Earlyn Wheeler, Maurice Miller, Robert Umberger,  
Lucien Allen, Emil Erickson*

#### ROCKPORT 2004 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE

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# Town of Rockport

## 2004 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### *Summary*

#### *Purpose and History*

This 2004 Comprehensive Plan is the fundamental plan for Rockport, providing specific guidance to town officials, administrators, and volunteer committees as they govern, advise and regulate activities that affect town citizens. The Comprehensive Plan Committee's mission is: "To review, revise, and update the 1993 Comprehensive Plan so as to guide the actions and public policies of the citizens of Rockport and their representatives into the future."

Rockport has an exemplary track record in the development of town plans. No fewer than four planning documents have guided Rockport with the first one written more than 30 years ago in 1971.

A volunteer committee produced the town's 1993 Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Maine Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, which mandated that all Maine cities and towns prepare a plan to manage future growth. Many communities found that comprehensive plans completed in the 1990s provided an excellent inventory of community resources and analysis of critical issues, but have not adequately guided growth or met

other planning objectives. Rockport's 2004 Comprehensive Plan must be more bold and specific in guiding and addressing community issues with clear goals, policies, recommendations, and a concise road map for implementation. It will ensure that Rockport complies with the state's current Growth Management Act.

#### *Planning Process*

To accomplish its mission, the Rockport Comprehensive Plan Committee, organized in the fall of 2001, used a simple yet thorough process to engage the residents of Rockport and to carry out its deliberations. The committee began its work by interviewing the town's standing committees, selectmen, municipal staff, and other business and community organizations to understand their perspectives on Rockport's strengths, weaknesses, and vision for the future.

Residents were asked to help the committee build a "My Favorite Rockport" exhibit using photographs taken by Rockport citizens of their favor-

ite outdoor spots in town (see the appendix of this plan). These images, on display at the Rockport Town Office, present a pattern of important places, from the hills to the harbor, which Rockport residents hold dear.

The committee also held meetings in all five neighborhoods – West Rockport, Simonton Corner, Rockville, Glen Cove, and Rockport Village – to learn what citizens think about Rockport, as well as their own neighborhoods. The turnout at these meetings varied in size, but all residents who attended were passionate about the future of their community.

In the fall of 2002, the committee developed, with the help of the University of Maine, a lengthy survey that was sent to all Rockport households. Its purpose was to determine how all residents feel about a broad range of issues, including those that were articulated during earlier meetings in the various neighborhoods and with committees and organizations.

The return of more than 640 questionnaires, or a response rate of more than one-third of the households, gave the committee a deep understanding of the issues and positions of a broad cross-section of Rockport residents. The survey report and all the responses are included in the appendix of this plan.

Committed to the premise that drafting a comprehensive plan is a community effort, the committee consistently worked to engage the public. Meeting weekly, the committee used its time to hear from experts, welcomed the participation of the public,

and deliberated long and hard on all subject areas to be covered by the plan. All meetings have been open to the public and the public has been encouraged to attend. Official meeting minutes are available for review at the town office.

From time to time, workshops were held primarily for the purpose of evaluating maps and considering land use options. The committee also took field trips to better understand Rockport's topography and how the land has been used.

Committee members assumed areas of responsibility in order to get particularly well informed in specific subject areas. Each member then drafted his or her section of the plan for the entire Committee's review. Having participated in a discussion about the merits of the first draft, the committee member then prepared a second draft for the committee's review. On average, each section of the plan required three drafts before the committee felt comfortable with its content in terms of scope, point of view, and priorities.

Finally, as the plan was drafted, unfinished sections were taken out into the community as committee members solicited input from residents who were most knowledgeable about the subject matter and/or most likely to be impacted by the recommendations. The committee was impressed by the willingness of citizens to become involved, and the results of this collaboration were important. A large majority of the opinions solicited were extremely thoughtful and, without a doubt, they have helped the committee develop a better plan.

## *Plan Philosophy*

The philosophy that underpins this document emerges from citizen input, the committee's deliberations, and the best thinking that the committee could incorporate from the completed research. It is this spirit of collaboration and deliberation that provided the overall concepts to help guide Rockport. They are:

1. The presentation of recommendations that are specific in nature, supported by statements of intent, and designed to provide both clarity and some latitude for the implementors.
2. Through new tools and programs, there is an emphasis on non-property tax revenue genera-

## S U M M A R Y

tion coupled with cost containment, so that the expense of town government will be less of a burden on the Rockport community.

3. Land use zones have been simplified to provide broader options and clearer differentiation in use criteria between the types of zones.
4. The plan strives for fairness when considering the wide variety of needs and requests of Rockport's diverse citizenry.
5. An extensive process of collaboration was used while drafting the plan to encourage interested citizens to reach a consensus before the plan is formally presented at public hearings.
6. In reviewing the explosion of demands placed on the town's resources and services over the past decade in the form of traffic, regulations, cost transfers from county, state, and federal government, as well as the demands of Rockport's citizens, the committee is recommending bolder solutions to mitigate the impact of future growth.

### *Goals and Priorities*

Rockport's overall goals have been largely consistent since the 1971 Town Plan.

Rockport's residents favor the following:

- Preservation of the aesthetics of Rockport, which includes its rural character, beauty of the hills, beauty of the harbor, and intimacy of its neighborhoods.
- Mitigation of the rate of increase in costs associated with town government.
- Better access to coastal waterfront and rural areas of Rockport.
- Protection for Rockport's natural resources, including wildlife habitat and water quality.
- Encouragement for Rockport's enviable mix of businesses and non-profit activities, including such diverse enterprises as healthcare, media communications, art studios and galleries, education, boatbuilding, innkeeping, furniture making, and landscaping.
- Better transportation planning to mitigate the impact of increased traffic and the threat to public safety caused by congested highways.
- A welcoming town government that truly serves and encourages the participation of its citizens.
- Promotion of community vitality and health, which includes providing business opportunities, recreational opportunities, and affordable housing, so that Rockport can remain an attractive place for people of all income levels and generations.



## *Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan*

It took a committee of 10 volunteers more than two years to create this plan with the collaborative help of hundreds of the town's citizens. It would be a mistake not to emphasize that it will take a similar effort to actually implement the plan. The task should not be underestimated. Therefore, when the plan is approved, the committee believes the Board of Selectmen, as well as every town committee with responsibility for implementing a portion of the plan, should devote a permanent portion of their agenda to discussing, reviewing, and evaluating their progress toward the goal of implementing Rockport's 2004 Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee recommends that the Rockport Selectmen appoint an Implementation Committee to oversee the complete implementation of this plan. That committee should be chaired by a selectman, perhaps on a

rotating basis, and include members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, and representatives of the Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Ordinance Review Committee, and the Budget Committee. The committee should also include a selection of interested residents.

Not all policies can be implemented at the same time; therefore, we recommend that policies be sorted according to those which can be implemented within one year and those that require more time.

The most important policies should be given priority, but a great many of our recommended policies can be implemented in parallel, so there is little need for the Implementation Committee to work on policies sequentially. Furthermore, it is important that all recommended policies be implemented in a timely manner.

## *Data and Resources*

The Town of Rockport now has abundant information about and maps of its geology, natural resources, transportation systems, economics, population, public facilities, and recreation opportunities, thanks in large part to state agencies who have pooled their data for planning purposes. This information exists in printed, as well as digitized form.

The information for Rockport includes:

- the State of Maine Comprehensive Planning Resource Package, October 2003
- Beginning with Habitat package
- and in this Rockport Comprehensive Plan 2003, Book I, Book II, and the Appendix.

This information is invaluable to future town planning, and the drafting of new ordinances. It is also highly useful for town committees and boards, as they proceed through decision-making processes.

To not use this information would be doing a great disservice to Rockport. We recommend that the town planning office, as well as the assessors' agent and code enforcement office, make these resources available to the public, as well as to committees and boards, so that residents can more fully understand the community and its landscape.

## S U M M A R Y

### *Implementation Priorities* *Short Term (Completed in one year)*

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Reduction in the growth rate of expenditures	Selectmen and Town Manager	26
Encourage better orientation and training of elected officials and appointed volunteers	Selectmen, all committee and board chairmen, with help from Maine Municipal Association	34
Improve budget process	Selectmen, Budget Committee Chairman, and Town Manager	34
Redefine Rural Zone	Ordinance Review Committee	74
Reduce conflicts of interest with policy and bylaws	Selectmen and all committee and board chairmen	34
Develop a wetlands ordinance	Ordinance Review Committee	85
Provide information about non-point source pollution	Conservation Commission	89
Evaluate public access to waterfront	Recreation Committee	94
Create a pathways and sidewalk system master plan	Pathways and Recreation committees	124

## S U M M A R Y

### *Implementation Priorities*

#### *Long Term (More than one year is required)*

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Tax policy and property tax reform	Selectmen and Town Manager	26
Redo all land use ordinances related to the Comprehensive Plan	Ordinance Review Committee	74
Establish a Land for Rockport's Future Fund	Selectmen and Finance Director	85
Develop a program of impact fees	Selectmen, Finance Director, and outside consultant	29
Expand regional effort to provide affordable housing	Town Manager and Selectmen	119
Expand on other aspects of regionalism	Town Manager and Selectmen	44, 51, 131
Work with MDOT on variety of issues	Public Works Director, Town Manager, and Conservation Commission	111, 112, 113
Establish a program of development rights	Selectmen and Finance Director	27

## *State Growth Management Goals*

(30-A M.R.S.A. §4312 subsection 3)

**3. State Goals.** The Legislature hereby establishes a set of state goals to provide overall direction and consistency to the planning and regulatory actions of all state and municipal agencies affecting natural resource management, land use and development. The Legislature declares that, in order to promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the State, it is in the best interests of the State to achieve the following goals:

- A.** To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl;
- B.** To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development;
- C.** To promote an economic climate which increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being;
- D.** To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens;
- E.** To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers and coastal areas;
- F.** To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas;
- G.** To protect the State's marine resources industry, ports and harbors from incompatible development and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public;
- H.** To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources;
- I.** To preserve the State's historic and archeological resources; and
- J.** To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

## *State Coastal Management Goals*

(38 M.R.S.A. §1801)

1. To promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation and recreation;
2. To manage the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats, to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources;
3. To support shoreline management that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources;
4. To discourage growth and new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety;
5. To encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources;
6. To protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance and maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast even in areas where development occurs;
7. To expand the opportunities for outdoor recreation and to encourage appropriate coastal tourist activities and development;
8. To restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses; and
9. To restore and maintain coastal air quality to protect the health of citizens and visitors and to protect enjoyment of the natural beauty and maritime characteristics of the Maine coast.



# *Funding & Governance*

FINANCIAL PROGRAMS

GOVERNMENT

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

# FINANCIAL PROGRAMS

This section makes recommendations that should be applied in the governance and administration of Rockport to improve the town's financial position.

**The intent of this section is to:**

- Ensure that best practices are followed to gain financial efficiency and optimum value for monies spent.
- Encourage the town to pursue programs that increase funding to the town in addition to property taxes.
- Adopt tools that encourage and facilitate the recommendations covered in the land use section of this plan.
- Introduce programs that facilitate fair treatment for taxpayers and landowners, as well as new and long-time residents of Rockport.
- Require the forecasting and sizing of a capital program based on foreseeable needs and growth projections that permit the town to meet the objectives of this plan.

In considering alternative revenue generation as a means to reduce the growth in property taxes, in addition to cost control, other options than those addressed in this section were considered. They included the imposition of a local sales tax, a local income tax, and additional or increased fees.

However, apart from potential conflicts with state tax policies, all of those types of taxes or fees would simply add in a recurring sense to the existing tax burdens of Rockport citizens.

In lieu of the above, a model has been chosen whereby revenues collected are:

- voluntary;
- the result of state and/or federal programs; and
- are "one-time" in nature.



## *Fiscal Capacity*

As of 2001, Rockport's total debt of \$10.38 million represented 2.3 percent of the town's \$450.15 million assessed value and a per capita debt of \$3,235 (population 3,209). According to the Maine Municipal Bond Bank's recommendation that a town's debt should not exceed 5 percent of assessed valuation, Rockport appears to be comfortably below the bank's recommended limit at 2.3 percent and far below the state's limit by statute of 15 percent.

However, the Comprehensive Plan Committee is not comfortable with the disturbing trend that

shows Rockport's total debt has increased from \$1.08 million in 1991 to \$10.38 million in 2001. This meant that the town's per capita obligation went from \$378 per resident in 1991 to \$3,235 in 2001. Town leaders have to ask themselves whether the incomes of Rockport's residents are growing at a rate that will allow the town to service future such increases of debt. The committee recommends that Rockport's debt capacity be measured by ability to pay as opposed to a measure based upon assessed property valuation.

## *Borrowing Limits and Current Debt*

Based on the Maine Municipal Bond Bank's criteria, Rockport's debt should not exceed 5 percent of assessed valuation, even though the theoretical limit by state statute is 15 percent.

Rockport's assessed value as of April 2001 was \$450.15 million.

The town's debt has two components: *exclusive* (incurred only for the Town of Rockport) and *shared – or overlapping – debt* (incurred for the schools, county, and Midcoast Solid Waste Corporation).

### *Exclusive Debt*

For the work done exclusively for Rockport, the debt totals \$3.153 million, of which:

- \$2.225 million was spent on sewer work
- \$384,000 on various bonds (i.e. Opera House, recreation & cemetery land acquisition)
- \$366,000 on the new harbormaster's building
- \$178,000 on capital leases

This portion of debt represents 0.70 percent of the 2001 assessed value of the town and compares to a 1991 figure of 0.31 percent

### *Shared – or Overlapping – Debt*

Rockport's shared, or overlapping debt, totals \$7.227 million, of which:

- \$363,000 was spent on Knox County work
- \$6.659 million on schools
- \$205,000 for the Midcoast Solid Waste Corporation

The total of both debts represents 2.3 percent of the 2001 assessed value and a per capita debt of \$3,235 (population 3,209). Over the past decade, Rockport's debt as a proportion of assessed valuation has increased seven-fold. This rate of debt growth and the accompanying interest costs need to be capped until the impact of programs recommended in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan can be assessed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the selectmen study, or appoint a body such as the budget committee, to determine what a conservatively appropriate per capita debt level should be for the Town of Rockport.

## Growth in Expenditures

The following examines growth in total expenditures and selected major components from June 30, 1993 to June 30, 2001. Given that total expenditures have increased at 2.35 times the combined rate of the Rockport's rate of population growth and Maine's rate of inflation over an eight-year period, new and more aggressive approaches to funding and managing the cost of running Rockport and the school districts are necessary.

<i>Data for Fiscal Years ending June 30</i>				(Source – Rockport annual reports)
Year	Total Revenues	Total Expenditures	Total * Public Works	Total School* Expense (SAD & (CSD) Assessments
1992-1993	\$4,742,000	\$4,582,000	\$563,000	\$2,344,000
1993- 1994	5,141,000	4,899,000	761,000	2,574,000
1994-1995	5,507,000	5,109,000	741,000	2,757,000
1995-1996	5,818,000	5,945,000	933,000	3,030,000
1996-1997	6,042,000	5,955,000	999,000	3,195,000
1997-1998	6,644,000	6,309,000	1,011,000	3,435,000
1998-1999	6,962,000	6,628,000	1,059,000	3,564,000
1999-2000	7,181,000	7,153,000	1,090,000	3,848,000
2000-2001	7,420,000	8,001,000	1,252,000	4,112,000

\* Accounts showing the greatest increase over the period. Public Works includes the Mid-Coast Solid Waste facility, sewer system, and cemetery costs.

A logical formula for anticipated budget growth, barring unusual price or growth impacts, can be stated as: change in cost = change in price plus change in load, where we can define "change in price" to equal inflation and "change in load" to equal population growth.

From 1993 – 2001, the approximate population increase in Rockport was 9 percent

From 1993 – 2001, the cumulative state inflation rate was 22.7 percent

Given the above formula, the increase in total expenditures should not have been greater than 22.7 percent plus 9, or 31.7 percent. For the Town of Rockport the percent increase in expenditures in 2000-2001 compared to 1992-1993 has been:

Total Expenditures ..... 74.6 percent, or 7.2 percent annually

School Expenditures ..... 75.4 percent, or 7.3 percent annually

Public Works Expenditures ..... 122.4 percent, or 10.5 percent annually

Whether these increases are a reflection of state imposed costs (with no accompanying revenue; i.e., unfunded mandates), demands for more and better municipal services, a reflection of previously deferred

expenditures, the impact of growth and sprawl, or price increases for items of cost that are not reflected properly because of weighting in overall inflation rates is difficult to individually assess. To correct these rates of increase, however, requires major

changes in how Rockport interacts with the State of Maine in relation to increased funding, the administration of the town overall, and in how the town controls the character of growth, as well as controlling normal operating expenses.

*This chapter as it applies to financial issues offers some solutions designed to raise revenues from sources other than property taxes. However, the town's selectmen and town manager must also concentrate on developing a culture of cost containment within town governance. We believe that costs could be contained and, in some cases, reduced by a more rigorous budgeting process (see Government Section on page 31).*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the town establish an Office of Finance consisting of the current finance director and a new employee of equal capability, who can become the resident expert in four new initiative areas (see page 22). It would be the responsibility of this individual to start the implementation of the four new initiatives and have them all largely in place by the end of 2005.
- Each of the five selectmen, and/or members of the budget committee, takes on an area of responsibility and becomes knowledgeable in one of the five financial areas of gifting, grants, development rights, impact fees, and the capital improvement program to assist the finance office in carrying out these programs.
- Establish an annual award program consisting of up to two \$1,000 awards for up to two employees who make the greatest impact on cost savings for the town in the previous year.

## Property Tax Policies

Maine is one of the highest tax states in the nation, but the burden falls particularly upon the state's coastal communities, like Rockport, which have an ever-worsening problem with respect to real estate affordability. As a result of high property values and high property taxes, lower to middle income residents are being forced out of these communities. These towns are losing their income and occupational diversity because many year-round working families can no longer afford to live in them.

Higher prices resulting from market demand in the State of Maine lead to higher property assessments and to higher taxes. This situation comes about from a requirement in the constitution of the State of Maine that all real property be assessed on an equal basis. For example, in contrast to some

other states, reassessment does not occur just with a transfer of ownership, but at any time when there is a calculated discrepancy in assessed valuation. The higher sale prices of some properties result in higher assessments for all those in the town that are comparable.

In addition, there is the requirement in Maine that, with some exceptions, vacant land be assessed at its market value. In many cases market value is referred to as "highest and best use," meaning the property is valued as if carved up for residential development. This stipulation can enormously increase the assessed value of open land, increase taxes, and put pressure on owners to either apply for one of the exceptions to the law, such as putting land under conservation easement, or to sell their property for development.

The problem of high assessments and high property taxes is further compounded by state and federal actions with respect to funding education. A state government, short of funds, moves to push more and more of the costs of education down to the community. In Maine the wealthier the community, as measured by its state assessed real property value, the less state funding for education and the more this expense must be borne at the local level.

The results can be seen in Rockport where now only one piece of property on Rockport Harbor is owned by year-round residents. In addition, many of the non-waterfront homes in Rockport Village are owned by seasonal residents. High property values, high assessed valuation, and high taxes are sapping this community of its year-round population and its vitality. Only a major revision of the tax structure of the State of Maine can hope to halt or to reverse this trend.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is currently limited latitude in the application of municipal tax policy, either in terms of assessment or in a town's ability to require payment from certain tax classifications. Equally, there is no local authority to offer tax reduction except for properties where the current use is agriculture, tree growth, open space, or cases of severe poverty. In view of this it is recommended that Rockport pursue with the Maine Legislature the fairness of municipalities being required to assess properties on a "highest and best-use" basis, even though that usage as reasonably defined has yet to be achieved.

### IT IS ALSO RECOMMENDED:

- That all tax-exempt properties be urged to make a voluntary contribution in lieu of taxes, which recognizes the town's cost in providing services.
- That under Home Rule Authority the town create "benefit districts" to ensure that only residents who benefit from "local improvements" pay for those improvements. This process is currently being followed with the sewer system and should continue to be followed.

## *Tax Increment Financing Programs*

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a state-sanctioned economic development incentive tool that allows municipalities to use all, or a portion of, the new property taxes generated by a commercial investment project to assist in the project's financing. Once the term of the TIF project is completed the "additional" taxes generated as a result of the development flow to the town's general tax fund.

Municipalities can use TIFs as an economic development incentive. The program enables a municipality to designate a TIF district in which new or expanding businesses can receive financial support from the new property tax revenues generated by their investment project. The municipality may choose to fund a portion of the project improvements. A second option is to return a percentage of the new tax revenues to the company to offset its costs of development. This usually comprises build-

ing of infrastructure to support the project together with payments for bond financing.

While taxes generated by new investments can be sheltered from the state's computations for school and county funding for the length of time the TIF is in place, the primary purpose of the TIF program is to provide a town with the capability to offer incentives or improvements to attract new investment.

A TIF district cannot exceed 5 percent of the land within the town's boundaries, nor may the district include more than 5 percent of the assessed value of properties in the town.

Rockport has a proposed policy regarding TIFs, which covers the terms and conditions under which a TIF would be accepted by Rockport. For more discussion about TIFs, see the Business Section on page 147.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That Rockport's Board of Selectmen review TIF applications and recommend for approval those that meet Rockport's policy on TIF and are determined to be in the best interest of the town.
- That Rockport strengthen its involvement with the state regarding tax policy. Recommendations to the state for TIFs should be the responsibility of the town manager and the assessors' agent.
- That TIFs become the responsibility of the town assessors' agent, along with one of the aforementioned advisors.
- That the existing TIF be exploited for additional benefits.
- Exploit the existing TIF for further benefits.

## NEW INITIATIVES

### *Gifts*

One of the most desirable and effective ways of reducing the town's tax burden, while maintaining Rockport's character and offering improvements to the quality of life for all its citizens, is through a program of gifting.

Town residents were asked in the "Survey of Rockport Households" circulated in the fall of 2002 by the Comprehensive Plan Committee whether they would consider leaving a portion of their estate to the Town of Rockport.

Of the 643 responses:

8.6 percent said "Yes"

34.8 percent said "Not Sure"

56.6 percent said "No"

Residents were also asked if they would consider making other financial gifts to the town. Of the 643 responses:

17.1percent said "Yes"

38.4 percent said "Not Sure"

44.5 percent said "No"

Currently, the Rockport Public Library maintains an endowment fund of almost \$650,000 as the result of an endowment.

In Grafton, Vermont, financial gifts maintained through trusts and foundations (see appendix, *Yankee Magazine*, September 2002) are now worth approximately \$65 million and provide substantial ongoing support to the town.

Financial gifts in the form of cash and securities, endowments, and remaining capital from town-administered individual annuities can represent substantial sources of income and program funding.

Given the positive response of Rockport residents toward gifting, the time is right to cultivate this opportunity on behalf of all Rockport's citizens.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop an ongoing process for encouraging and receiving gifts from potential donors.
- Establish a process to accept and administer the spending of financial gifts received from Rockport citizens or others.
- Initially the gifting should be restricted to the more easily administered forms of cash/securities and endowments, with annuities to follow at a later date.
- Establish the capability to provide expert advice to citizens who are willing to participate in the order to maximize the value of the gift for both the donor and the town.

## *Grants*

While this is a well-understood concept, the scope and nature of available state and federal grant programs are not widely known.

Grant programs cover a wide variety of needs ranging from funding for planning to rehabilitation programs, or to health and community development. Knowledge of what's available, as well the understanding and skill in filing of applications, is essential.

While tens of millions of dollars in grants are

available each year, much of which comes from federal sources, the demand often exceeds the supply. The grant process is a competitive and criteria-based method of distributing limited amounts of money. It is essential that to participate, Rockport must take the initiative in applying for specific grant monies. Additionally, projects of regional interest and collaborative applications with other communities should be explored and pursued.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the town establish expertise in and knowledge of all state and federal grant programs, and that those offering the greatest benefits without future claims or obligations be pursued. This should be done with the assistance of one of the advisors recommended on page 19.
- That within the "Office of Finance" (see Implementation Section on page 27) "Grant Writing" capabilities be defined and included as a job requirement.



## *Development Rights*

Development rights programs are important market-based approaches to influencing where development occurs. Central to a development rights program is the concept that ownership of land is not a single right, but several rights that can be separated. One of these is the right to develop land.

Long used in Europe and Canada and first used in the United States around 1970, the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) provide a way for compensating landowners for either not developing or under-developing (from allowable limits) their land. In essence, the development right “portion” is severed from the rest of the land and can be sold or transferred. Once sold, the land no longer contains a development right and is permanently protected through a conservation easement attached to the deed.

Once purchased, development rights can be used by the new owner whose land is in an accredited “receiving” zone to increase the density of development from that which would otherwise be allowed. As one example, Groton, Massachusetts, has preserved more than 400 acres, including a shore-

line greenway along the Nashua River, using a development rights program.

For the purposes of this comprehensive plan, the transfer of development rights represents a tool for preserving “Open Space” in the rural zone. As an initial position, Rockport’s rural conservation zone should be considered the “sending” zone, with the village and the residential zones as the “receiving” zones for development rights transfers.

The purchase of development rights from a landowner is a payment to that landowner *not* to change the character of his/her land from its current use. While the land can be sold for “current use” value, the obligation *not* to change its use transfers to the new owner. The landowner retains all other ownership rights attached to the land, and a conservation easement is placed on the land and recorded on the title.

The same process can be used by a unit of government, such as the Department of Transportation, which essentially purchases the right to develop the land and retires that right permanently, thereby assuring that development will not occur on that particular property.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That a purchase and/or transfer of development rights program be instituted, and to the degree that other municipalities in the region are willing to participate, the program will be extended to them.
- That Rockport begins discussion with the Maine Department of Transportation (as explained above) to determine the extent and timing of that agency’s participation, as well as the role of the town in recommendations and administration of the program.
- That both a private (i.e., landowner to landowner) and a public (i.e., municipality/DOT to landowner) program be defined and instituted.
- That the town establish itself as the recordkeeper of the overall plan for all land within Rockport’s municipal boundaries, including those with development rights transactions.
- That a third party be hired, at least in the short term, to initiate and administer the plan.
- That Rockport charge an appropriate fee for processing transactions, maintaining of records, and ensuring that terms and conditions of agreements are met.



## Impact Fees

The purpose of impact fees is to pay for the capital cost of infrastructure improvements resulting from building and/or development, which places a forecastable need to expand Rockport infrastructure(s) to accommodate additional growth.

The charging of impact fees provides an allocation of the cost of future expansion directly to current growth, as opposed to paying for that expansion from general tax revenues. In essence, the charging of impact fees extends the principle that a cost relationship should exist between beneficiaries and the local improvements required for them.

Impact fees are one-time cash payments required of developers/builders (and therefore the new owner) to pay for a new development's fair share of capital facilities. The fees imposed must meet the two important tests: the "substantial benefit" and the "rational nexus" tests.

Those tests require:

- The expansion of the facility and/or service

must be necessary and must be caused by the development.

- The fees charged must be based on the costs of the new facility/service apportioned to the new development.

The fees must benefit those who pay; funds must be earmarked for a particular account and spent within a reasonable amount of time – usually five to ten years.

(Reference Appendix 5-3-2 – Title 30A MRSA, 4354 – Impact Fees. As a further reference see Appendix 5-3-3, Saco Zoning, Article 16 Impact Fees.)

The Maine State Planning Office has also compiled a handbook, *Financing Infrastructure Improvements Through Impact Fees*, which is available at [www.state.me.us/spo/landuse/pubs](http://www.state.me.us/spo/landuse/pubs).

The Town of Saco has written an ordinance covering the general case for impact fees – with subsections covering specifics (i.e., Parks and Recreation impact fee). This looks like a good model.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That a program be established to assess impact fees for all new construction and change-of-use projects.
- That, at least initially, impact fees be established and assessed for the following:
  - Sewer and water treatment facilities
  - Schools (only residential buildings would be assessed with impact fees for schools)
  - Streets and roads
  - Parks and recreational land
  - Town buildings, public works, and/or operations centers
- That a consultant or expert third party be engaged to establish the administrative process, and more importantly, a process for and initial calculation of selected impact fees.
  - One such firm is:
    - Tischler & Associates, Inc.
    - 4701 Sangamore Rd. Suite N210
    - Bethesda, MD 20816-2508
    - Paul S. Tischler – 1-800-424-4318
- That impact fees be charged in addition to the existing building permit fee.

## *Implementation Plan: Finance*

<b>Program:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Reduction in the growth rate of expenditures.	<p>While this program is dependent on the specific actions listed below, it is essential that all programs be implemented to gain maximum benefit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire an additional finance director to prime implementation of the designated programs.</li> <li>• Each of the five selectmen takes on an area of responsibility and becomes and knowledgeable in one of the five areas of Gifting, Grants, Development Rights, Impact Fees, and the Capital Program. Selectmen also need to agree on who will be responsible for each area.</li> <li>• Establish a Cost Saving Award program for the two top employee contributors.</li> </ul>	Selectmen and the Town Manager	April 1, 2005
Tax Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and present submissions to the Maine Legislature on "Highest and Best Use."</li> <li>• Introduce a request for voluntary contributions from tax-exempt properties.</li> <li>• Maintain the policy of creating "benefit districts" to ensure residents who benefit privately or in a limited number pay for work or improvement done.</li> </ul>	<p>Town Manager</p> <p>Selectmen</p> <p>Selectmen</p>	<p>Initial submission by April 1, 2005</p> <p>Effective the 2005/2006 tax year</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Tax Increment Financing	Follow Rockport's Policy on TIFs	Selectmen	Ongoing
Capital Improvement Plan	<p>Establish the town manager as a member of the Capital Improvement Plan Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require: A 20-year forecast A 5-year plan An annual update of the plan and forecast</li> <li>• Establish parameters for various classes of assets to determine capital needs and comparative performance.</li> <li>• Segregate within the plan: New replacement and leased assets. Gifts and Impact Fees as funding sources. Projects resulting from impact fee collections.</li> </ul>	<p>Selectmen</p> <p>Selectmen with particular involvement of the selectman's whose area of expertise this is.</p> <p>Town Manager and Capital Improvement Committee</p>	<p>December 31, 2005</p> <p>2005 and ongoing</p> <p>2005 and ongoing</p>

## *Implementation Plan: Finance*

<b>Program:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a promotional program to cultivate potential donors</li> <li>• Establish the process to accept and administer gifts initially in the form of cash, securities, land, and endowments with annuities to follow.</li> </ul>	Newly appointed finance director together with the selectman whose area of expertise is in gifting	December 31, 2005
Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish expertise in applying for grants that benefit Rockport.</li> <li>• Require an understanding of state and federal grant programs, with some prioritization of those suited to Rockport's needs, either as the town alone or in a regional context.</li> </ul>	Newly appointed finance director together with the selectman whose area of expertise is in grants.	December 31, 2005
Development Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a purchase and/or transfer of development rights program and implement the remaining recommendations made under the Development Rights Section of Financial Programs.</li> <li>• Once the program is established, the following steps are required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Designate sending and receiving areas for transfer of development rights. The recommendation is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural as sending</li> <li>Residential as receiving</li> <li>Village as receiving</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The basis for this would be voluntary; i.e., sending landowners may sell their development rights or develop their land as permitted under existing zoning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish desired densities in the sending and receiving areas. Beyond establishing desired densities in the sending and receiving areas (see Land Use section), the purchase of development rights needs to have as part of the town's policy the right to increase building density within the receiving zone, contingent on meeting engineering standards. See example that follows on page 24 under Developing the Exchange Rate.</li> </ul>	Selectmen with appropriate assistance from other towns or outside expert sources, as deemed appropriate.	June 30, 2005

## *Implementation Plan: Finance*

Program:	Implementation:	Responsible Party	Timeline
Development rights, continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the exchange rate (see example below).</li> </ul>	Newly appointed finance director with the selectman mentor for development rights, supported by other expert sources deemed appropriate	September 31, 2005

### *Example Exchange Rate*

- Assume that Rural zoning permits a maximum density of one residence per 2 acres that is calculated to be developable.
- Assume an average development right value of \$80,000 per 2 acres of developable land
- Assume 10 development rights per acre of developable land (set by the Town of Rockport)
- Therefore one right equals \$4,000 (\$40,000 divided by 10).
- Assume Residential permits minimum building lots of one acre
- Assume an average value of \$37,500 per half-acre lot and \$50,000 for a one acre lot
- Assume five rights required to divide one acre into two half-acre lots. Exchange rate set by the Town of Rockport.

In the above example the sending party potentially receives \$80,000 per 2 acres of developable land for not developing. The receiving party pays \$20,000 to double the density of a one-acre lot ( 5 development rights x \$4,000 per development right). On the basis of the example assumptions the receiving party makes \$5,000 on the transaction covering one lot (two one-half lots at \$37,5000 per lot equals \$75,000 minus the \$50,000 value of a one-acre lot equals \$25,000; minus the \$20,000 cost of development rights equals \$5,000 profit per lot or \$100,000 on 20 lots (minus some additional expense).

*The purchase or transfer of development rights can be done in a number of ways:*

- Between landowners who own land – usually in a different land use zones – in a municipality or a region where municipalities have agreed to cooperative agreements.
- Between the municipality and a landowner. This can be either a purchase or a lease.
- Between the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) along state-administered highways/roads and a landowner. This is usually done in conjunction with municipal recommendations.

*\* Market driven or negotiated value.*

## *Implementation Plan: Finance*

Program:	Implementation:	Responsible Party	Timeline
Development rights, continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recording of development rights transactions</li> <li>• Determination and issuance of development rights</li> </ul>	<p>Assessors Agent</p> <p>Contract to a third party based on agreed-upon formula.</p>	
Impact Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a program to assess impact fees for all new construction and change-of-use projects</li> <li>• Select an initial list of facilities that impact fees would be applied to. The recommendations for impact fees in the Financial Program Section on page 25 offer such a list.</li> <li>• Because of the requirement for adequate historical and forecast investments of growth to support the level of impact fees, a third party should be retained who has demonstrated expertise in the calculation of impact fees.</li> </ul>	<p>Newly appointed finance director with the selectman mentor for impact fees</p> <p>Expert support from a third party should be a fundamental part of the implementation of impact fees</p> <p>The Ordinance Review Committee should also be involved in this process.</p>	September 31, 2004

# G O V E R N M E N T

This section recommends strategies to:

- Improve the process of governance by encouraging widespread geographic voter participation
- Develop and maintain an efficient and effective means of communication amongst municipal staff, elected officials, town committees, and town residents
- Ensure that residents understand how town government decisions are made
- Reduce the need for legal due process in town government
- Encourage the neighborhoods of Rockport to work together

Rockport is a municipal corporation organized according to the Maine law Title 30 and 30-A (Maine Revised Statutes Annotated). The town is governed by a town meeting / board of selectmen / town manager form of government, which was adopted in 1953 and became effective in 1955.

Rockport voters elect a five-member board of selectmen, which is responsible for administering the affairs of the town through oversight and policy development. The selectmen, in turn, appoint a town manager, who is the town's chief executive administrative official responsible to the board of selectmen. He or she directs the town's day-to-day operations and hires all municipal employees with the exception of a town attorney, who is hired annually by the selectmen. The town manager appoints all department heads, subject to confirmation by the board of selectmen.

There are numerous opportunities for Rockport voters to participate in the governance of their town. The annual town meeting is convened in June with the power to approve all town expenditures, enact ordinances, and approve the town's comprehensive plan. If required, a special town meeting is typically scheduled for November or March. The voters of Rockport may attend meetings of the selectmen, which are normally held twice monthly or they may volunteer to serve on one or more of the regulatory / advisory boards and committees that are appointed by the selectmen. Both the library and budget committees are elected by the voters. More than 100 citizen volunteers can actively participate in the governance of Rockport if they so choose. All committee meetings are open to the public and citizens are encouraged to participate at those meetings, and to become aware of the issues of local government. All selectmen, planning board, and zoning board of appeal meetings are now televised on a local cable channel.

Despite available opportunities to participate in Rockport's governance, it is clear that most citizens need help to better understand the proceedings of town government and their opportunities of participation. The Comprehensive Plan Committee was pleased by the interest of citizens when it held meetings in the neighborhoods. We believe

that residents are willing to learn more about town government when they are motivated to do so. Today's suburban society makes it more difficult to know one's neighbors but Rockport's residents want to meet their neighbors and this latent belief in community bodes well for greater participation in town government.

In 2003, there was a discussion about Rockport's need for a town charter to better define how Rockport is governed. Proponents felt that a town charter would help to define the responsibilities of both elected and appointed officials in a single accessible document. This committee has looked at this issue and determined that the argument for a town charter has merit, but the required process of creating a charter commission, and reaching a final voter-approved charter, is long and labor intensive. Therefore, it would be more efficient if citizen concerns and issues were dealt with directly by the selectmen and the appropriate committees. The Comprehensive Plan Committee has listened to as many concerns about governance as we could over the past two years and we have determined that there are several problem areas:

- The town's budgeting process does not provide a proactive role for the budget committee, which has no procedural duties early in the process. This is unfortunate because the budget committee members are elected by the voters and they are well positioned to help the town department heads as they consider how to allocate scarce financial resources.
- As with all towns, citizens are concerned about decisions being made under the influence of conflicts of interest. This possibility increases when a person serves on multiple boards and / or committees.
- And, as with all towns, citizens are concerned about code enforcement and ordinance enforcement. The increased complexity and contentiousness of land use issues at times overwhelm code officers and local boards. In Rockport, progress has been made in the development of improved systems that aid the quality of decision making. Compliance starts



## GOVERNANCE

with getting the appropriate permit and the current code officer is well aware that his office must work on educational outreach to explain selected land use issues.

- The poor attendance at the annual town meeting is worrisome because voters are not get-

ting a chance to discuss and deliberate about critical issues relating to the town's future.

- The responsibilities and authority of Rockport's elected officials, boards, and committees, as well as municipal staff, are not always well defined.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Elected officials, boards, committees and municipal staff should communicate useful information to the town's residents, including summer residents, by way of all available media. Specifically, the town's website needs to be used more to engage the public.
- Improve access to town government and its decision making using the same methods, including, whenever possible, the televising of more meetings. For example, all school board meetings should be televised and the school boards should provide the town with written annual reports. All other committees should have their meetings televised on a rotating basis, which could be adjusted based upon the level of public interest.
- The town's annual report should be improved with more consistent cost and performance data from all town entities to facilitate year-to-year comparisons and growth rates.
- Improve the orientation and training of elected officials and appointed volunteers.
- To address potential conflicts of interest, the town should require a policy of full disclosure of any personal involvement in an issue to be resolved by the board on committees dealing with that issue. In the event of a possible conflict, the remaining committee or board members will vote to determine whether the member with such a conflict should recuse himself or herself from participating in that issue.
- Develop a broader more effective method of recruiting volunteers throughout the town.
- Make town meetings more vital by including discussion of important issues from the previous year and of the forthcoming year.
- Periodically schedule selectmen outreach meetings in Rockport's five neighborhoods – West Rockport, Rockport Village, Glen Cove, Simonton Corner, and Rockville.
- Town officials must make the best possible decisions and defend their actions but not take sides between parties in conflict. An honest attempt at mediation should be required for parties in conflict.
- Strengthen the town's annual budget process by increasing the role of the elected Rockport Budget Committee. This includes:
  - a) exploring the feasibility of the selectmen providing the budget committee with budget objec-



## GOVERNANCE

- tives. The budget committee, in consultation with the town manager and department heads, would prepare a budget;
- b) the budget prepared by the budget committee would be presented to the selectmen who would critique and make suggestions for review;
  - c) the final budget would be approved by the selectmen and presented to the town.
- Rockport does not necessarily need more ordinances; what is needed is consistent enforcement of ordinances already on the books. Therefore, the Code Enforcement Officer should be recognized for improvements already made and encouraged to better use technology, such as GIS, to keep productivity high and to ensure a superior level of customer service and code enforcement.

## *Implementation Plan: Governance*

<b>It is the town's policy to:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Reduce conflict of interest	Develop policy and appropriate bylaws	Selectmen, committees, and board chairmen	Spring 2005
Encourage orientation and training	Develop curriculum with the help of the Maine Municipal Association  Hold training sessions  Evaluate and plan program	Selectmen, committees, and board chairmen	Spring 2005  Fall 2005  Ongoing
Schedule selectmen outreach	Develop schedule	Selectmen	December 2005
Improve budget process	Develop new process	Selectmen, budget committee chairman, town manager	Winter 2005
Conflict resolution	Determine policy and methods and mediation	Town manager, selectmen	Winter 2005
Definition of responsibilities and authority	Create a manual of job description and scope of responsibilities for every board and committee	Town manager, selectmen, and appropriate chairman	December 2005

# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

This section recommends strategies for strengthening Rockport's existing capital improvement process so as to ensure that projects are prioritized equitably using fiscally sound methods.

*References: See Appendix*

- Capital Improvements Plan 1999-2004
- Letter dated March 10, 2003, To the Board of Selectmen, *re*: Capital Improvements Report

See also the Financial Programs section of this plan on page 16

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Capital can be defined as an expenditure on an asset having future value or worth, as opposed to current operating expenditures. "Future" is usually thought of as three or more years, depending on the class of the asset.

The current program covering the period 2002-2004 deals almost exclusively with Public Works requirements and walking trails. While individual items are justified, there does not appear to be a fundamental or overall plan for different areas; i.e., geographies or community development (new and replacement).

A longer-term, more frequently updated capital improvement plan has the potential to smooth capital spending, result in lower costs of borrowing, and assure timely building of infrastructure.

With the introduction of impact fees comes the requirement for a more disciplined and defined program of capital works and spending. (See Impact Fees on page 25)

The existing Capital Improvements Plan covering the period 1999-2004 is the third five-year plan for Rockport. Apart from a description of capital improvements, the plan establishes:

- a) A planning process
- b) A rating (priority) system
- c) A discussion of financing methods

The content itself is largely driven by state requirements, extensions to existing infrastructure, and recommendations made by town management.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- That preparation of a five-year capital improvement plan with a proposed budget for the first year (the next fiscal year) and projections for the remaining years be continued.
- That parameters for the various types of assets be established as a basis for determining need (e.g., for Public Works, using miles of road and population – current and forecast – as bases for evaluation).
- That replacement, lease-purchase, and new assets be distinguished in the plan.
- That a 20-year forecast of growth and needs forms the basis for a fundamental plan for judging the five-year and annual capital plan.
- That gifts and impact fees be identified (where applicable) as funding sources within the plan.
- That the town manager be a member of the capital improvement plan committee.
- It is important to recognize that while designated growth areas should command the bulk of capital improvements, it is vital to consider giving significant weight to necessary capital projects that will benefit areas of town that have historically been slighted in this process.
- The five and 20-year plans should include a determination of the town's capacity to borrow capital (capital debt). This requires forecasts of assessed taxable property and population growth.

Total capital debt capacity should be examined as having three limits:

- a) A bank limit
- b) A state limit
- c) A town limit

Using the most conservative of a, b, or c, a maximum debt limit should be set. In addition, there should

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

be a 20-year forecast of new capital debt. The forecast should be offset by retirement of capital debt. This procedure will allow town officials to monitor the availability of capital debt capacity on an on-going basis.

- The Capital Improvement Plan 1999-2004, Section 3, Financing Methods for Capital Improvements deals not only with financing techniques but touches on the distinction of capital projects that benefit all the town's population and those projects that benefit a specific portion of the town's population.

This Comprehensive Plan recommends that an initial list of capital improvement projects fitting each of these two categories be included as part of Section 2, The Capital Improvement Plan planning process, either as part of the rating system or as a separate sub-section. The following is a suggested initial list.

Included in the tax base of all residents:

- a) schools
- b) parks and recreation land
- c) town buildings and associated infrastructure (administration, public works, and operations centers)
- d) town vehicles (if capitalized)
- e) traffic control and street lighting
- f) pathways

Included in the tax base of residents who only directly benefit:

- a) sewer lines and any associated disposal and/or treatment facilities built or expanded to service the new base
- b) sidewalks within village boundaries or sidewalks within subdivisions outside village boundaries

It is not intended that other forms of funding (gifts, grants, impact fees, tax incentives) be excluded from use in either of the above categories where they apply.

- The Capital Improvement Committee should seek the authority and act on behalf of the town to obtain studies (financial, environmental, assessment of the trade-offs) that provide an overall perspective of fit and benefit for new additions of major infrastructure.

For example, to provide a wastewater disposal treatment and sewer system to a newly developing section of Rockport. The options could be to:

- a) extend the existing grid anchored in Camden and Rockland
- b) build a stand-alone treatment facility in the newly developing area
- c) create a blended model of a and b.

Expert evaluation and/or study work will be required to make the best overall decision.

- It is the recommendation of this comprehensive plan that the Capital Improvement Committee conduct comparative engineering studies and/or other professional assessments to de-

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

termine the most cost effective and best-suited infrastructure to encourage and direct development within Rockport's designated growth areas.

Experience should also be gained (assuming implementation) with the gifts, grants, impact fees, and tax incentive programs (TIFs) to determine their potential funding.

All three of these recommendations are within the scope and capability of the Capital Improvement Committee with the exception of the study authority in Recommendation Four. However, study authority can be sought from the Board of Selectmen on a case-by-case basis.

# *Rockport in the Region*

# ROCKPORT IN THE REGION

This section makes recommendations for Rockport to enhance and expand its role in the broader midcoast region.

- Work collaboratively with the municipalities throughout the midcoast.
- Partner with the Town of Camden, City of Rockland, and other local governments throughout Knox, Lincoln and Waldo counties to combine services and develop infrastructure that will result in more efficient administration, reduction in costs, and improved quality of life.
- Use various tools available to expand economic development opportunities in the region.
- Work regionally to address key land use issues so as to direct growth and minimize impacts on the midcoast's community character.



Regionalism, as long as it is meaningful and manageable, is essential to maintaining and controlling the Town of Rockport's fiscal well-being. Economies of scale, where they exist, can reduce the overall costs to municipal government. These economies can only be obtained by adopting a strong regional approach and encouraging partnership and collaboration. However, the government structure in New England has not lent itself to regionalism, unlike the strong county governments found elsewhere in the country.

Working together, municipalities can reduce overhead expense, increase services, and more effectively plan and manage for the future. Rockport's greatest regional effort is its participation in both School Administrative District 28 and the Five-Town Community School District. Rockport also engages in the regional sharing of infrastructure, namely wastewater disposal with Camden and Rockland and the Midcoast Solid Waste Corporation.

Other collaborations, primarily with the Town of Camden, such as the joint purchasing programs for fuel, equipment, and professional services, as well as sharing of manpower, demonstrate the effectiveness of working regionally. Additional collaborations have been suggested in the areas of affordable housing, public safety, public works, recreation, library services, general administration, code enforcement and planning, and economic development.

Three areas of great regional import to the midcoast are economic development, transportation planning, and land use and natural resource protection. In order to balance the demands of residential and business growth while preserving the character the region enjoys, municipalities must work together and determine the optimum use for certain areas of the midcoast. This approach will enable all midcoast communities to jointly use the tools available resulting in a stronger regional identity.

## *Economic Development*

Economic development can be regional by definition. For example, a business may be located in one municipality, but the employees live throughout the region, resulting in broad economic impact. Because of this general principle, regional economic development projects are encouraged and promoted with state legislation and incentives.

The costs to a single municipality of developing a business or industrial park are so prohibitive that no new large (200 acres or more in size) business or industrial parks are being proposed or created that are financed exclusively by a municipality. Realizing this, the state has passed legislation that permits municipal governments to work regionally for the purpose of economic development.

Towns in the midcoast have traditionally shied away from regional economic development with a number of failed attempts such as the pro-

posed expansion of the Rockland Industrial Park into Owls Head and the creation of the Midcoast Development Corporation, a regional economic development organization. However, to secure the region's economic position, the municipalities throughout the three-county midcoast need to embrace regional economic development and explore projects that take advantage of the public policies the state has established to assist regions grow a sound economic base.

There is a host of resources available to assist in the promotion of regionalism that are not fully utilized by the town, such as Midcoast Regional Planning and Eastern Maine Development Corporation. The focus of these organizations is regional. They can provide tools in effective planning, development, and management.

### *Transportation Planning*

Rockport also participates on the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC), established by the Maine Department of Transportation to facilitate public participation during the formulation of transportation policy.

RTACs are advisory committees consisting of citizens representing environmental, business, municipal, planning, and alternative forms of transportation, as well as members of the public. The purpose of the RTAC is to provide early and effective input into Maine DOT's plans and programs. The RTAC process is an effort to de-centralize transportation planning and give the public an opportunity to help shape transportation policy and the decision making process.

RTACs collaborate with the DOT and the Regional Councils to develop regional advisory reports for each RTAC region. Rockport is part of RTAC-Region 5, which encompasses communities from Brunswick to Winterport. The Regional Advisory Report outlines each RTAC's objectives,

goals, and strategies for improving transportation systems in their respective regions. The RTACs meet regularly and advise Maine DOT on a number of issues including advisory report strategies, updating of the advisory reports, and the Biennial Transportation Improvement Program (BTIP). BTIP is Maine DOT's programming document that defines potential projects for the next two years. Municipalities can suggest projects to be included in the BTIP for potential funding. In the 2002 Regional Advisory Report, RTAC 5 recommendations included:

- a. to reconsider National Highway System designation on Route 1 from Warren to Rockport; and
- b. to strengthen the relationship between Maine DOT and the bicycling community in Brunswick, Camden, Thomaston, Rockport, Rockland, Lincolnville and Belfast.

### *Land Use Planning*

Rockport shares a variety of natural resources with the surrounding region, ranging from a common drinking water system to Penobscot Bay, which supports the economy of the area, and the unique landscape of the midcoast, which provides healthy habitat for area wildlife, plants, and humans. Local land trusts, Aqua America Maine, and other organizations have individually explored re-

gional collaborations. Municipal collaborations, however, have not been adequately tested. The Midcoast Regional Planning Commission, which is administered by the Eastern Maine Development Corporation and guided by the Maine State Planning Office, offers one of the few official regional efforts in the Rockport region.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That a task force with the Town of Camden, City of Rockland, and other interested municipalities be formed to explore all possible partnering opportunities. The task force would also analyze the benefits and drawbacks of areas where regionalism efforts would seem to have a real financial impact and appear manageable. That includes:
  - Regional dispatch
  - Police and fire protection
  - Engineering
  - Code enforcement and planning
  - Public works
  - Regional purchasing
  - Grant writing
  - Wastewater infrastructure expansion
  - Recreation
- Require this task force to report quarterly to the Board of Selectmen about their investigations and conclusions.
- Continue to work with the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee District 5 (RTAC 5) to establish multi-town corridor plans along Route 1, Route 17 and Route 90.
- Ensure the continuity of certain land-use policies across municipalities essential to preserving natural habitats, watershed, and development patterns. Through an inter-municipal agreement, establish a multi-town planning committee that develops policies on regional issues.
- Through the task force, explore the feasibility of establishing regional incentives, such as the purchase or transfer of development rights which allows for such rights to be acquired in one municipality and used in another municipality's receiving area.
- Be an active participant in the Midcoast Regional Planning Commission and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy process directed by Eastern Maine Development Corporation and the Maine State Planning Office.
- Urge the entities mentioned above to explore development of a regional business or industrial park, similar to First Park in Oakland, using legislation that allows municipalities to come together as a regional taxing entity for the purposes of regional economic development projects.

## *Implementation Plan: Regionalism*

<b>It is the town's policy to:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Expand Rockport's role in regional planning	Work through Midcoast Regional Planning Commission to coordinate the appointment of an ad hoc committee made up of representatives from multiple communities (2 members from each community) to explore all possibilities of regional partnership, including transportation issues, economic development opportunities, and land use.	Town Manager and Selectmen	September 2004
Explore new areas of collaboration with neighboring municipalities	Appoint a task force to analyze and develop recommendations on regionalization of all potentially feasible areas and require quarterly reports.	Board of Selectmen	September 2004 and on-going

# *The Business Community*

# BUSINESS

A strong and vibrant business community is essential to the long-term viability of the Town of Rockport. Key economic clusters exist in Rockport, providing a significant number of jobs in construction services, health care, and tourism. Other businesses play a vital role in the community and there are policies that can be adopted to help foster the proper economic development for the character of Rockport. The intent of this section is to:

- Foster business development in specific industry sectors that are compatible with existing economic clusters through the use of Tax Increment Financing, the development of business parks, and regional cooperation.
- Provide a sound commercial tax base in Rockport of compatible industry sectors with the current commercial mix and the existing community character.
- Encourage and support the continued growth of traditional occupations, such as boat building and agricultural pursuits, as well as home-based businesses of artisans and craftspeople.

Some business owners have the perception that Rockport is not friendly to business. This Comprehensive Plan sets in motion a vision to embrace sound economic development activities in Rockport and the region, to support and foster the growth of small business in Rockport, and to promote business attraction and development that fits the character of the community.

The region's two service center communities, Camden and Rockland, have limited land available for commercial development. Camden's downtown and small industrial park are fully developed, and Rockland is relying on redevelopment along Camden Street to support retail expansion, particularly superstore development, such as Home Depot. Land for business/professional office development or modest industrial/commercial development is available in communities such as Rockport, Warren, or Union. Recognizing this development scenario, Rockport has an opportunity to clearly identify the type of business and commercial development it wants to encourage and work towards defining public policies that help realize that development.

Over the next decade Rockport will experience continued pressure for business development, particularly along Route 1 and Route 90. Traffic volume and the siting of Penobscot Bay Medical Center have helped dictate development patterns along these two commercial corridors. As a result, Route 1 hosts many of the town's medical services, retail and tourism sector businesses while Route 90's development continue to be retail and service oriented.

Northeast Health, parent company of Penobscot Bay Medical Center, is Rockport's largest employer with more than 800 employees. An additional 200 people work in the various medical offices located along Route 1, in close proximity to the hospital. As the demand for health care rises so will the need for future development of medical services businesses and professional office space. Encouraging development clusters and small business or professional parks such as Fox Ridge will

maintain an aesthetically pleasing development pattern along Route One that fits the character of the community.

Building contractors and landscape services located in Rockport support much of the construction activity in the midcoast. These businesses have grown considerably over the last decade and are expected to continue to prosper. Many of these businesses are located along Route 90 and are beginning to shape that corridor's identity. As this sector continues to grow, Rockport needs to be cognizant of the nature of the construction and landscaping business, recognizing certain characteristics of the trade, such as truck traffic, starting times, and storage issues when forming public policies.

Tourism has long been an economic engine for the region and will continue to play a critical role in maintaining economic prosperity. The Samoset in Rockport hosts 100,000 visitors each year. It has helped establish this area as a major destination for people throughout the world. Other hospitality properties and ancillary businesses have been developed along Route 1 to support the growing tourism sector. Existing ordinances have allowed Rockport to maintain a good balance with the tourism sector and this balance should continue into the future.

Rockport also has a rich tradition of fostering a strong home-based and small business environment with distinct clusters of artisans and craftspeople, boat builders, specialty food producers, and publishing enterprises that have helped create a distinct identity for the Midcoast. Businesses such as the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship, State of Maine Cheese, Maine Gold, Downeast Enterprise, and Rockport Marine add a unique dimension to the business character of Rockport. These types of businesses need to be celebrated and encouraged through favorable public policies.

Business is essential to creating a vibrant community that is fiscally healthy. Rockport's business and commercial tax base makes up 20 percent of the town's total valuation. Expansion of the town's commercial tax base can help provide tax relief to

Rockport residents. Identifying business and industry sectors that are compatible to the community's character and providing incentives to businesses to locate, expand, and embrace certain design standards can help achieve a number of goals outlined in this plan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT:** Rockport should establish an economic and community development committee to assist in the promotion and continued support of business activities in the community. Rockport's small business and agricultural enterprises help make Rockport a viable community and contribute greatly to the character residents and visitors enjoy.
- **BUSINESS ZONE:** To provide for a healthy mix of residential and business growth, it is critical that Rockport establish distinct commercial zones. Lights, noise, access, traffic volume, and other potential issues pit business against residence. Certain businesses want to conduct business in an area that does not pose any conflicts with residents. It is a goal of this Comprehensive Plan to provide direction to establish ordinances that protect and balance the interests of both business and residential.
- **BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL PARKS** provide an opportunity for businesses to cluster within a single development, limiting curbcuts, and creating a positive environment to conduct business. Rockport should promote the development of this type of development through Tax Increment Financing (see below), the waiving of certain fees, and any other means at the town's disposal depending on the needs of the developer.
- **ECONOMIC CLUSTERING:** Identify areas of town where existing economic clusters exist or have the potential of existing and promote the future development of similar businesses in those locations. Likely clusters to establish in Rockport are:
  - Financial Services
  - Computer Technology and Software Development
  - Artisan and Craftsperson, including boat building and furniture making
  - Medical Services
- **BUSINESS INCUBATOR:** A development that supports entrepreneurial business start-ups, is built on clustering, and often generate a steady development of particular industry sectors is the business incubator model. Focusing on specific economic clusters and establishing a support structure can foster long-term development of viable businesses, benefiting Rockport as well as the entire Midcoast region.
- **REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL PARK:** Maine has legislation in place that allows municipalities to join together to develop regional business/industrial/professional/technology parks. The midcoast should study the feasibility of establishing a large business park that each of the municipalities share in the cost of development as well as in the revenues generated from the development. An industrial park of this nature requires a minimum of 200 acres and is likely to be sited in a neighboring community such as Thomaston, Union, or Warren.



- **LAND-USE:** Specific land-use policies need to be developed that direct business development and provide equity with residential development. They include the need to:
  - Support existing ordinances that support the objectives of the 907 mixed business/residential zone.
  - Create a buffer zone on large lots of greater than five acres where the lot transitions from business to rural conservation.
  - Support the ordinances related to the existing 1000 zone.
  - Encourage businesses to establish parking in the rear of the lot with the building sited closer to the street, particularly in the village areas.
  - Establish a clear vision for Routes 1 and 90 so to minimize strip development, encourage clustering, and make efficient future infrastructure development.
- Good outdoor lighting at night benefits everyone. It increases safety, enhances the town's night time character, and helps provide security. New lighting technologies have produced lights that are extremely powerful, and these types of lights may be improperly installed so that they create problems of excessive glare, light trespass, and higher energy use. Excessive glare can be annoying and may cause safety problems. Light trespass reduces everyone's privacy, and higher energy use results in increased costs for everyone. There is a need for a lighting ordinance which recognizes the benefits of outdoor lighting and provides clear guidelines for its installation so as to help maintain and compliment the town's character. Kennebunk, Maine, enacted an Outdoor Lighting Ordinance in 1992 and has been cited as a useful model.

### ***Tax Increment Financing***

Municipalities can use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as an economic development incentive within their community. The program enables a municipality to designate a TIF District in which new or expanding businesses can receive financial support from the new property tax revenues generated by their investment project. The municipality may choose to fund a portion of the project improvements or to return a percentage of the new tax revenues to the company to offset its costs of development.

Rockport has a Tax Increment Financing district along Route 1. The TIF was established to extend sewer and water infrastructure to the top of Richard's Hill, resulting in the expansion of Camden National Bank and the development of State of Maine Cheese. This infrastructure TIF sup-

ports a municipal bond with revenues from the TIF being used to repay the bond. The town has the ability to amend the current TIF policy and/or to establish a new TIF district with different criteria.

Moving forward, Rockport should establish a TIF policy that is proactive and promotes the objectives set forth in the Comprehensive Plan as it pertains to business and economic development strategies. TIFs can provide a financial incentive to a business to develop in a certain area of town and to adhere to specific development standards. TIF can also be an effective tool for the town to expand its utilities' infrastructure to support thoughtful economic development. The following outlines general policies Rockport should adopt in its use of TIFs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify specific industry sectors Rockport would like to attract or encourage expansion and develop a TIF policy providing incentives for those types of businesses.
- Define a TIF District, an area in Rockport where business development will be encouraged.
- Establish clear design standards for the TIF District and draft ordinances to support those standards within the TIF District.
- Set performance standards businesses will need to meet to be eligible for TIF revenues.
- Offer a provision for credit enhancement agreements (CEA) in the TIF policy, an agreement between the town and the business whereby the tax increment is paid directly to the investing business to cover project costs.
- The CEA would only be established if the business was to meet the standards outlined in the TIF policy. This policy would be an effective way to promote clustering of businesses, such as the development of business / professional parks. It would help attract a desirable economic cluster such as software development or artisan / craftsperson. The Town of Rockport would be put in a position of greater leverage with potential businesses rather than react to certain developers and businesses.
- Engage in an infrastructure TIF to extend infrastructure to a business that meets a predetermined job creation goal, property tax investment standard, or greater, long-term objectives for the town identified in the capital needs plan or infrastructure section of this plan.
- Establish a dedicated fund for future economic development initiatives and infrastructure expansions.

## *Implementation Plan: Business*

<b>It is the town's policy to:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Establish an Economic Development Committee	Appoint a volunteer committee of interested residents and Rockport business owners to address issues related to business development.	Town Manager and Selectmen	September 2004
Create a dedicated business zone	Draft and adopt land-use policy that defines business zones in Rockport, the location a permitted uses.	Ordinance Review Committee	November 2004
Establish an economic development strategy for the Town of Rockport	Draft a working document that clearly outlines future economic development strategies including economic clustering, business attraction activities, TIF policy, a vision for commercial corridors along Route One and Route 90, and issues of regionalism.	Town Manager and the Economic Development Committee	November 2004
Develop a business incubator to support and foster entrepreneurial enterprise	Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a small business incubator targeting entrepreneurial business.	Town Manager, Economic Development Committee, and a consultant	June 2006
Develop a regional industrial park in the midcoast	Work with the municipalities throughout the Midcoast to determine the interest of developing a large industrial/business park and conduct a study to identify possible sites and the market feasibility for such as development	Town Manager, Economic Development Committee, EMDC, MCRPC Chambers of Commerce	June 2006
Establish the necessary public policies to support business development and growth.	Draft and adopt land-use policies that support business development and growth and adheres to the vision laid out in the document.	Ordinance Review Committee	November 2004
Establish a sound TIF policy.	Review the existing TIF policy and make improvements to allow for both infrastructure expansion and credit enhancement agreements. Draft a TIF policy that is well defined and directs qualified businesses to specific standards	Town Manager, Selectmen, a consultant, an the Economic Development Committee	November 2004



# *Land Use*

## LAND USE

### AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

#### WILDLIFE HABITAT

#### WATER RESOURCES

#### MARINE RESOURCES

#### SCENIC RESOURCES

# LAND USE

This section provides a framework for future regulatory and planning committees to direct the formulation and implementation of Rockport's land use policies in order to meet Rockport's long-term objectives. The objectives are to:

- Preserve the rural landscape and small-town character of Rockport to the greatest extent possible by designating land use areas that allow citizens to enjoy the natural beauty and other assets of the town, while making Rockport an ever-more desirable place to live and work.
- Facilitate the use of land for a variety of living and working preferences, ranging from village neighborhoods to rural living with extensive open or agricultural space. These land uses should also encompass suburban subdivisions, mixed business/residential areas, specific commercial areas, and should include provision for affordable housing in these different environments.
- Permit and encourage sensible growth to occur in appropriate zones for both residential and business purposes, while conserving the maximum amount of open land for agriculture, forestry, recreation, scenic purposes, watershed protection, and wildlife habitat enhancement.
- Encourage the re-development and vibrancy of true "village" life in appropriate areas of the town with the following: 1) a variety of lot sizes; 2) retail/business uses mixed with residential uses; 3) public and commercial services within convenient walking distances; 4) interconnecting streets with sidewalks, street trees and other traffic calming methods to promote safe pedestrian travel; and 5) areas of common "green space" for recreation and enjoyment.
- Minimize the increase in tax burden on residents and business owners in the town by minimizing future municipal spending and growth through more efficient land use concepts. And, encourage a reasonable level of growth of the tax base where it is cost-effective to do so.
- Simplify and clarify, to the extent possible, the number of zones and the intent of each. In this way, future boards, committees, and town employees who must create, interpret, or enforce ordinances will have a clear and common understanding as to the intent and scope of the ordinances and policies with respect to the zones.

This section will detail the committee's vision for the various categories of land use and will delineate them geographically on the town land use map as a basis for the eventual re-drafting of the Rockport Land Use Ordinance and for the development of other means of implementing the desired vision. The appendix of this plan also details available tools for the implementation of this plan.

## *Summary of Land Use Categories*

The Comprehensive Plan Committee has identified four broad categories of land use in Rockport that, with variations within each category to accommodate existing realities, lead to a total of eight specific zone “types” – any of which might apply to multiple land areas within the town. These are briefly summarized here for an overview, then further detailed in subsequent subsections. In ad-

dition to these basic categories, which comprise the bulk of the town’s land area, there may also be a few “special” zones required to accommodate some unique situations existing in the town, such as the areas around Pen Bay Medical Center, Samoset Resort, and the Five-Town Transfer Station.

### *Villages*

Rockport has historically had five “villages” within its borders and we believe that it is in the town’s interest to maintain, enhance, and identify these neighborhoods as potential growth areas.

This strategy will simultaneously promote more of the small town character listed above as a plan objective and relieve some, though certainly not all, pressure for residential or commercial development.

The basic village concept is to encourage mixed residential, retail, civic, non-profit, and commercial use, and to incorporate features, including relatively small lot sizes with higher percentages of lot coverage, sidewalks, street trees, interconnecting roads, and other features to encourage walking within the area, and green spaces for aesthetic and recreational purposes.

Specifically, to recognize the peculiarities of different village areas, we recommend three types of village zones (details of recommended building parameters are given in the next section).

#### **ROCKPORT VILLAGE**

Comprising the present boundary and zoning characteristics of Rockport Village (existing Zone 901) with essentially no change except that some portions of Beauchamp Point (Megunticook Golf Course) will be re-zoned into a Rural zone. Some key features of this zone are:

- minimum lot size (12,000 square feet in sewer-

areas or 15,000 square feet for multi-family dwellings);

- reduced frontage (60-foot) and set-back requirements (10-foot side/rear; 20-foot front);
- ordinances to permit/encourage retail and civic activities desirable for village life.

#### **ROCKPORT DOWNTOWN**

Comprising current Rockport Downtown (existing Zone 913) with no change from the present geography and characteristics. Some key features are: higher maximum lot coverage (70 percent) and minimum frontage (40-foot) and setback requirements (6-foot side/rear; 10-foot front).

#### **OTHER VILLAGES**

Comprising the four other village areas that have been identified as having further growth potential (West Rockport, Rockville, Simonton Corner, and Glen Cove) and providing special zoning characteristics to encourage their growth along the village model. Some key features of these zones are:

- minimum lot sizes (12,000 square feet for sewer or community waste disposal system areas; 40,000 square feet for unsewered areas);
- similar frontage (60-foot) and setback requirements (10-foot side/rear; 20-foot front) to Rockport Village;
- ordinances to permit/encourage retail and civic activities desirable for village life.

## Residential

Rockport has several large areas that are now developed into suburban-type subdivisions with relatively large (1 – 3 acre) lots. Houses are set well back from the street, use private wells and septic systems, and provide for basically automobile-centric living. Other areas of town are characterized by single family dwellings spaced out along town roads. Clearly, provision must be made for these areas in future land use planning, with sensible zoning ordinances to enhance their contribution to community life (such as creating incentives to developers to provide through streets to connect adjoining developments, provide sidewalks, etc.).

Future developments can be enhanced through requirements or incentives for “clustering” homes to provide more open space for wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and recreation.

Specifically, this plan recommends two types of residential zones (again, specific recommended building parameters are given in the sections detailing each zone type):

*Residential* – Comprising about twelve areas

in the town, these constitute the most typical form of non-village residential development areas. Some key features of these zones are:

- larger minimum lot sizes with options for reducing lot sizes through development incentives to be described further on in this section;
- 33 percent maximum lot coverage;
- modest minimum dwelling sizes (600 square feet), 100-foot road frontage, etc. (as in the existing Zone 912).

*Coastal Residential* – Comprising four areas in town, these valuable resources are stretches of relatively undisturbed, sparsely settled properties along the shore of Penobscot Bay. From the water, as well as from land, these lands are important to the image of Rockport and it is for preservation the natural beauty of this shoreline that they deserve special consideration in zoning ordinances.

Some key features of these zones are the same 40,000 square-foot lot sizes and 33 percent maximum lot coverage, but larger minimum dwelling sizes (1,000 square feet) and 150-foot road frontages.

## Business

Rockport needs to accommodate its business community to enhance its tax base, provide work and entrepreneurial opportunities for town residents, provide necessary goods or services to the town citizenry, and to remain a diverse and productive participant in all phases of midcoast Maine life.

In this age of telecommunications, service industries, and small scale operations, many businesses can be conducted out of a residence or an essentially home-like environment and provision for such “cottage industry” businesses must be made in several of the land use categories mentioned above.

On the other hand, there are also more conventional commercial operations whose locations, appearances, land use specifications, environmental impacts, and other effects on the community must be more closely controlled, but still deserve a “business-friendly” environment that won’t discourage them from settling in Rockport.

Provision is now made for such operations predominantly along routes 1 and 90, and this plan advocates continuing that practice, but with more attention given to ordinances and incentives to encourage “clustering” of these enterprises.

Clustering is recommended to minimize curb cuts, maximize shared open spaces in the commer-



cial areas, create more aesthetically-pleasing and efficient buildings and parking areas, as well as to generally maintain the attractiveness of the major gateways into Rockport. Specifically, this plan recommends two types of business zones.

**Commercial** – Comprising three areas of town where commercial/business centers could be developed in environments with residential usages discouraged. Key features are:

- 40,000 square-foot minimum lot sizes;

- 100-foot front set-back, 25-foot side/rear set-backs,
- planning board-approved landscaping, unobtrusive parking area requirements, and reduced curb cuts whenever possible.

**Mixed Business/Residential** – Comprising most of the areas along routes 1 and 90 that are currently included within existing Zone 907 and where there is currently a reasonable mix of business and residential properties.

Key zoning features are essentially the same as in the current Zone 907.

## Rural

Rockport is fortunate to have several large areas of land that are still relatively undeveloped and of great value to the town for scenic, agricultural, environmental, recreational, or other open space purposes. There is strong feeling within the town that as many as possible of these open space areas should be kept just as they are today.

While this may not be completely possible, we can help to protect a high percentage of these special areas through acquisition or easement grants to conservation organizations or the town, or through appropriate ordinances and other incentives (provided in the appendix of this plan under

the section “Available Tools”). Some of them are already under ownership, easement, or other protection of various conservation organizations.

Other properties, privately held, should be monitored carefully so as to take advantage of conservation opportunities as they come up. While residences and cottage industry operations certainly exist in these areas, their future development and use must be controlled judiciously so as to avoid further sprawl. These can all fall under a single type of Rural Zone, with characteristics defined further on in this section.

## *Background and Recommendations – Villages*

### *Intent*

A key strategy for managing growth within Rockport is the designation of certain specified growth areas within which residential, civic and commercial development is encouraged. Such focused growth could partially relieve the pressure on other areas that give Rockport its rural identity. Obvious candidates for these growth areas are the five historically traditional “villages”: Rockport Village (surrounding Rockport Harbor); West Rockport (at the intersection of Routes. 17 and 90),

Rockville (alongside Route 17, near the Rockland line), Glen Cove (abutting Clam Cove, alongside Route 1, near the Rockland line), and Simonton Corners (at the intersection of Main Street and Park Street.). These villages vary widely in size, numbers of homes, potential home sites, settlement patterns, water and wastewater systems, as well as their accessibility to everyday services and community activities.

### *Rockport Village*

**Rockport Village** is the most “village-like” in its characteristics, but still lacks some features that could enhance its attractiveness and potential for additional growth.

Rockport Village runs east of Camden Street and along Union Street, from the Camden Town line (the “Arch”) south to the intersection of Pascal Avenue and Route 1. It also includes the area west of Rockport Harbor along Mechanic Street and Russell Avenue to approximately Aldermere Farm.

There are quite a few essential services and facilities within reasonable walking distance of most of the properties in this village area including the town office, police and fire departments, Rockport Elementary School, Penobscot Bay

YMCA, post office, Rockport Public Library, Rockport Opera House, Rockport College, the village green and several parks, along with their public access to the harbor for work and recreation.

There is also office space, as well as art galleries and antique shops, doctors’ offices, a newly opened hair salon, and other small businesses.

However the village lacks a critical mass of retail shops and services that would further encourage everyday pedestrian use, such as a grocery store, drugstore, barber shop, gift shops, dentists’ offices, or other businesses suited to revitalize the business downtown. It also suffers from inadequate parking at certain times of the day in “high seasons” or during some public events.

## **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

While the perception may be that Rockport Village is relatively densely settled with little opportunity for further development, research shows that with current minimum lot size restrictions (12,000 square feet) there is, with in-filling, sufficient land available for many additional houses within the Rockport Village zone.

Aside from incorporating some incentives to encourage the use of purchased development rights and the building of affordable housing, no change seems warranted in the basic residential land use parameters of the village. This plan recommends, however, that ordinances – such as requirements for business parking – be reviewed and revised, and other incentives be explored to encourage a greater diversity of services for Rockport residents.

## Rockville

**Rockville** village area lies astride Route 17, shortly after entering Rockport from Rockland on Rt. 17 from the south, just beyond Chickawaukie Pond to the east and just before Maces Pond to the west.

Route 17 serves as a bypass to the main part of the village, which consists primarily of modest houses along both sides of Old Rockland Street, which is about 3,300 feet long (roughly two-thirds of a mile), from one intersection with Route 17 to the other.

There are approximately 25 houses there now and it is estimated that there might be room for another 20-30 homes or businesses with appropriate lot subdivisions and smaller lot sizes (assuming that sewage disposal or engineering for common wastewater disposal facilities could be made available).

In addition to the “core” village area as identified above, this plan recommends including Gurney Street, from Old Rockland Street to Vinal Street, which has become increasingly settled with several new subdivisions at the outer boundary of the village area.

There are also some houses and lots along Route 17 on the eastern side and down both Porter Street and Rockville Street running eastward toward Route 1, including a small development of houses on Kimberly Drive and Rockville Street.

Rockville has Aqua America Maine (formerly Consumers Maine )water, but no public wastewater facility at present. Community facilities include

a small non-denominational community chapel in the heart of the village and two other churches on the other side of Route 17: the Kingdom Hall Jehova’s Witnesses Church and the Lakeview Presbyterian Church.

The only evident businesses in the area are the Green Thumb nursery and a hair dressing salon in a private home. The nearest post office is in West Rockport, about two miles to the north. There are no other retail establishments in the area.

Most of this described area now lies within existing Zone 911, the “Village Preservation District,” which primarily permits single-family detached dwellings, but also includes some “agricultural and horticultural uses,” covering the Green Thumb business as well as pasture land and hayfields at the southern end of Old Rockland Street.

Building standards for Zone 911 specify 40,000 square-foot minimum lot sizes, among other criteria. Other portions of the area, outside the core village (further out on Gurney, Vinal, Porter and Rockville streets and on Kimberly Drive) are in existing Zone 908, Rural Conservation, calling for 60,000 square-foot lot sizes and other more stringent specifications.

It should also be noted that some of this area lies within the shoreland overlay, encompassing watershed streams leading into Chickawaukie Pond or Mace’s Pond.

## OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This area appears appropriate for a modest growth area with some opportunities for infilling in the core village area itself and some possibilities for small additional developments on land east of Route 17. The land to the west of the existing houses fronting on Old Rockland Street would appear to be undevelopable because of very steep slopes and inclusion of a stream feeding into Chickawaukie Pond.

In re-designing the zone boundaries, we recommend *excluding* from this zone the agricultural land at the southern end of Old Rockland Street, in order to maintain that open space upon entering the area from Rockland, but *including* the Kimberly Drive development and the subdivisions being developed off of Gurney and Vinal streets.

Obviously, significant further development would require major investments in additional infrastructure – primarily an extension of the sewer line to the area from either the Rockland end of Route 17 or from West Rockport. Alternatively, consideration should be given to the possibility of

a community wastewater disposal system as a way of encouraging village development should a sewer line extension seem impractical.

There would also need to be improvements to the existing sidewalks, some method to permit safe crossing of Route 17 and, ideally, some incentives to encourage some additional retail establishments and small businesses to settle there to provide the services and work opportunities needed for long term viability.

## ***West Rockport***

**West Rockport** village is a quite large area with development potential at the intersection of routes 90 and 17 and extending northeast along Route 90 and Park Street. Presently designated as Zone 902, West Rockport Village also includes an optional overlay zone designated as Zone 910, "Traditional Village District Overlay."

That designation was approved by town vote in 1990 to facilitate the development of available land as a "modern village" with all of the pedestrian-friendly, close community-oriented features mentioned above as desirable village characteristics. Within the overlay district is a 120-acre area, known as Ingraham Corner, a project envisioned as containing smaller house lots, together with a small commercial district, public and civic build-

ings, and common neighborhood greens and walking areas.

Existing facilities and services in the area include the West Rockport fire station, post office, church, recreation center (ice skating, tennis courts, etc.) and several medium-sized businesses (computer sales/service/training, construction company, insurance agency, commercial glass company, antique shops, glass sculpture and brass foundry, office building, and other retail and small businesses).

Desirable additions to enhance village life would include other retail establishments, such as grocery and drugstores, medical offices, restaurants, barber/hairdressing shops, as well as, ideally, some other municipal services, such as schools, a library branch, and a meeting hall.

## **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

West Rockport holds potential for significant focused development, if the infrastructure investment can be attracted and necessary additional facilities and services provided. The boundaries of this zone should be maintained or expanded as widely as possible (within the 10-15 minute walking distance criteria used to characterize village life) to encourage the maximum amount of development, both residential and business, within it.

## *Glen Cove*

Rockland has made a conscious decision to concentrate “big-box” development in the north end, jeopardizing the Glen Cove gateway into Rockport. To counter this development direction, it is recommended that the Town of Rockport embrace a village design that balances business with residential and incorporates amenities that further enhance the gateway.

**Glen Cove** village area lies on the small inlet of Penobscot Bay known as Clam Cove, abutting Route 1 near the Rockland town line. It is a relatively small area of land with not much room for further development because of the natural constrictions of the shoreline, Route 1, and a stream that runs through the center of it. In addition to about 25-30 houses which are along both sides of Warrenton Street, there is a subdivision, The Pines, now being built out on a loop road known as Clam Cove Drive, with about another 25 house lots.

The Riley School, a private school, occupies considerable land area, with open space, in the middle of this village area. Clam Cove itself offers some recreational opportunities for wading, beach combing, walking, and, potentially (if water pollution, predator problems and clam reseeding requirements could be clarified and financed) recreational soft-shell clamming.

The Clam Cove Picnic Area lies adjacent to

Route 1, and was offered in 2003 by the state to the Town of Rockport for \$700. Voters approved that purchase in November 2003, becoming part of Rockport's recreational facilities, providing another potential access to point to Clam Cove, if a stairway is built.

No other significant municipal or community services are readily available, since the Glen Cove Post Office moved out of the small building it had occupied on Route 11. That post office is presently housed in the Dead River Convenience Store considerably further north (beyond walking distance) on Route 1.

There is a Denny's Restaurant within walking distance, but on the other side of busy Route 1, and a few other small businesses along the same highway. For major shopping, Wal-Mart, Shaw's, Home Depot, Staples, and T.J. Maxx are accessible but these might not be deemed as easily “walkable” in the village model sense.

The Romaha Trailer Park provides some affordable housing with approximately 25 homes, and it appears that there is some developable land behind that which could be explored for further development. This area is now designated primarily as Zone 904: Coastal Residential II, along with some portions in Zone 907: Mixed Business/Residential.

## OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The area is now serviced by the existing sewer line, so smaller lot sizes could be supported and should be encouraged. Further development seems feasible in the form of more in-fill in the area where the new subdivision is under construction and also in the wooded area behind the current buildings fronting on Route 1. Other improvements to the area that would enhance the village atmosphere of Glen Cove would include:

- Reduce the speed limit to 30 miles/hour through Glen Cove
- Improve or build sidewalks along Route 1 from the Rockland city limits to the Glen Cove rest area.
- Plant street trees along Route 1 and Warrenton Street.
- Encourage businesses to incorporate parking in the rear of the lot

### ***Simonton Corner***

The **Simonton Corner** village area lies at the intersection of Main Street and Park Street, at the northern end of town near the Camden town line. It is a small area, bounded by an old limestone quarry and the Goose River to the northeast, the Ashwood Waldorf School to the northwest, a well-developed suburban residential area to the southwest, and some open/agricultural land to the southeast. Presently there are approximately 10-20 homes in the area that could be considered a “vil-

lage.” There is a Grange building used as a meeting hall and for dances in the center of the village, a new Masonic Hall building on the outskirts, and a combination computer repair and coffee shop in the center, where there appears to be more space for other small businesses. There are currently no sidewalks, publicly-supplied water, or sewer lines. The people living in this neighborhood, however, feel strongly that they are members of a community.

### **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

As with Glen Cove, while it would be desirable to stimulate some village-type housing development in this area, it is simply not realistic to expect that a true “village” will emerge within the next decade or so. The growth within this neighborhood area will either continue with homes on larger lots using private septic systems or on smaller lots connected to a community wastewater disposal system.



## *Village Recommended Building Parameters*

Although the five village areas of Rockport have significantly different characteristics with respect to size, current building density, water and waste treatment facilities, etc., the Comprehensive Plan Committee believes it is best to specify for all of them the same building parameters with respect to areas that are either sewered or served by a community waste disposal system.

For Rockport Village and Rockport Downtown, we would recommend retaining essentially all of the building parameters currently specified for Zones 901 and 913, respectively. These appear to work satisfactorily at present and we see no reason to change them. As for the other villages, the committee recommends the following:

- Minimum lot size: 12,000 square feet (sewered or with community waste disposal system); 40,000 square feet (unsewered) – reducible to 20,000 square feet in unsewered areas with the use of transferred or purchased development rights\*, or to 12,000 square feet if lots are built in “clustered” fashion (requiring 40 percent of the total parcel to remain undeveloped).
- Minimum lot sizes can also be reduced to 8,000 square feet (sewered) or 12,000 square feet (unsewered) for the building of “affordable” housing (to be defined) which must be administered by some organization similar to the Camden Affordable Housing Authority to assure permanent affordability.
- Maximum lot coverage: 33 percent (or greater for affordable housing under strict controls)
- Minimum Dwelling size: 600 square feet
- Minimum Street Frontage: 60 feet
- Minimum Side/Rear Setbacks: 10 feet
- Minimum Front Setback: 20 feet
- Maximum Building Height: 34 feet

*\* where it can be confirmed that the soils will support wastewater disposal on such smaller lots*

## *Residential*

### *Intent*

These zones are intended to reserve the physical, historic and aesthetic qualities of areas in Rockport outside the villages, other than areas designated as commercial, mixed business/residential, or rural areas. They must allow for modest residen-

tial growth in these areas, while minimizing sprawl (continued development of houses placed essentially in the center of their lots to consume the maximum amount of space) and preserving essential wildlife habitat wherever possible.

### *Background*

There are numerous areas around the Town of Rockport that have been developed in recent years or decades that can be considered “suburban” in character and represent the core of the residential zones to be designated for future controlled development. They include:

- Rockport Woods Road – a small area off Route 1 just south of the Camden townline, comprising approximately 6-8 house lots
- Mystic Ave./Camrock Drive/Seaport Drive – a development off Main Street and between it and Cross Street comprising approximately 80-90 house lots.
- Forest Street East and West – a development off of Route 90 (opposite the Camden Hills Regional High School) comprising approximately 40 house lots
- Alexander/Ministerial/Homestead/Rock Ridge/Brandy Brook Circle – several developments to both sides of Park Street comprising approximately 70-80 house lots
- White Tail Drive – a development to the west of Park Street comprising approximately 40-50 house lots.
- Dennison St./Pine Brae Lane – a development to the east of Route 90, just north of Tolman Pond, comprising approximately 20-30 house lots
- Mount Pleasant Street/Kelley Drive/Kathy Lane/Chris’s Road/West Street Ext. – a large area between Rt. 17 and Rt. 90 comprising an unknown number of house lots (currently under development, including the new Limoge development).
- Beal Street/Bay View Drive/Kerygma Drive – several small developments off Vinal Street (south of Rockville Village) comprising approximately 30-40 house lots in total
- Wellington Drive – a large development to the east of Old County Road comprising approximately 30-40 house lots (plus some additional land reputed to be under development)
- Winding Way/Chickawaukie Pond Road – a development to the east of Old County Road (adjoining the above Wellington Drive area) and abutting Chickawaukie Pond, comprising approximately 40-50 house lots.
- South Street – a development to the west of Rt.1 comprising approximately 20-30 house lots.
- Beech Hill/Dell/Ben Paul Road – a rural residential area to the west of Rt.1 heading up to the top of Beech Hill.



## *Residential Recommended Building Parameters*

To achieve the intent stated above for these Residential zones, building standards should require:

- Minimum residential lot size 40,000 square feet (sewered or unsewered); reducible to 20,000 square feet with use of purchased or transferred development rights (in new and extended subdivisions) or to 12,000 square feet for clustered subdivision development (see below), or for the building of permanently controlled affordable housing (as described above for Village Parameters).
- Encourage “clustering” of new residential subdivisions with incentives in areas with public sewer; e.g. where clustering is employed in sewer areas, lot sizes could be reduced to 12,000 square feet as long as at least 40 percent of the buildable area of the subdivision is left as contiguous open space, either in agriculture or its natural state.
- In order to retain open space, contiguous natural area, and wildlife corridors, new residential subdivisions should be encouraged adjacent to existing subdivisions and strongly discouraged where they “leapfrog” existing development.
- Require that any new residential subdivision leave at least 25 percent of the buildable land area of that subdivision as contiguous open space for recreational purposes for the residents.
- Require that residences be sited so as to minimize the impact on natural and agricultural areas.
- Require at least 250 foot setbacks of residential lots from active agricultural lands. In cases where, for health or safety reasons, residences are incompatible with existing agricultural pursuits, residential development shall not be permitted.
- Prohibit construction on land with a slope of 20 percent or greater
- Require that setbacks be adhered to with regard to state and federal Designated Wetlands and Wildlife Protection areas (Reference the “Beginning with Habitat” documents and maps at the Rockport Town Office).
- Numerical parameters for this district would be consistent with those in the table on page 9-6 of the June 11, 2002 edition of the Land Use Ordinance of the Town of Rockport.
- Walking trails should be strongly encouraged in all new residential areas.
- All roads must be built to town standards.
- Access roads must be connected to existing town or state roads. Wherever practical, access roads shall connect at both ends with existing roads.
- If in the sole judgment of the Rockport Planning Board, it is determined that a proposed residential subdivision will put an unreasonable burden on town services, create water supply problems, overburden the sewer system, or lead to the need for additional school capacity, such development shall not be permitted, or appropriate impact fees may be assessed.
- Affordable Housing must be facilitated by including at least one 12,000 square foot lot/10 acres of land in the parcel to be developed.

## *Coastal Residential*

### *Intent*

To preserve the integrity and relatively undisturbed nature of Rockport's beautiful shoreline, while permitting limited residential development.

### *Background*

There are presently four areas that are almost exclusively residential in nature and abut the shoreline, not including land within the village zones of Rockport Village or Glen Cove, or land that can be designated Rural (and thus even further protected). They are:

- East side of Calderwood Lane on Beauchamp Point – comprising approximately 10-20 house lots
- East side of Route 1, south of Pascal Avenue (Rockport Village) to Pen Bay Hospital – comprising approximately 50-60 house lots (some of which are partially covered by the 500-foot zone from Rt.1 designated as Mixed Business/Residential – see map); also includes Oakland Shores seasonal vacation cabin colony.
- Rockport Shores – on the seaward side of Penobscot Bay Medical Center, comprising approximately 6-8 house lots.
- Eastward – East of Warrenton Street, abutting the Samoset Village condominiums.

## *Coastal Residential Recommended Building Parameters*

All building parameters given above for Residential zones apply to these zones as well, with the additional requirements listed below:

- Minimum dwelling footprint size should be 1,000 square feet
- Minimum street frontage be 150 feet (on Rt.1); 100 feet (other)

## *Mixed Business/Residential*

### *Intent*

This plan encourages business growth in a manner compatible with continued residential use along Routes 1 and 90; i.e., encourage mixed use development. The plan assures that such growth preserves and enhances the gateways to Rockport, and that new construction is on a scale consistent with existing buildings in these areas and designed in a manner compatible with existing structures, and that commercial structures are attractively landscaped and development is pedestrian friendly wherever possible.

### *Background*

Business activities in Rockport have historically taken place either within the village areas or

along Route 1 and Route 90, often intermixed with residential properties. To the extent that businesses can operate effectively and efficiently without unduly bothering adjacent or near-by residences – or conversely, that people who choose to reside in houses or apartments along these major traffic routes don't mind being near to businesses constructed within the zoning restrictions — we see this intermixed usage as benign and in keeping with the “village” spirit of the town. The Comprehensive Plan Committee feels that such mixed usage will help preserve the scale, style and character of existing architecture without the design and traffic problems of classic “strip” development of continuous businesses.

## *Mixed Business/Residential Recommended Building Parameters*

In order to achieve the intent stated above for these zones, building standards will require:

- Continuance, with some modification, of the concept of District 907 of the present Rockport Land Use Ordinance (the Business/Residential zone) that encourages the intermingling of business and residential uses in a compatible manner. This needs to be supported and built upon.
- To enhance the appearance of the “gateways” to Rockport, retain, support and where appropriate, strengthen the provisions of the Rockport Land Use Ordinance in Section 1000 adopted by the voters in June of 2001.
- To assure that new construction is on a scale consistent with existing buildings in the business/residential zone, retain the building footprint stipulations in the 907 Zone of the existing Rockport Land Use Ordinance adopted by the voters in June of 2002.
- Steps need to be taken to forestall further strip development. They include:
  - a. Limiting access rights along routes 1, 90 and 17. New construction should be required to use one access to reach multiple businesses. Where feasible, multiple businesses and/or residences should use shared access (combined entrances) as illustrated in the Transportation Section of this plan on page 96).
  - b. Steps should be taken to find land and make it available for the development of additional business campuses including development of the “pure” Commercial Zones discussed below.
  - c. To further discourage strip development, certain areas now part of the 907 business residential

district should be deleted from it. As recommended in other portions of this plan, there are areas that should be changed to residential, others that, due to soil conditions or scenic considerations, should remain undeveloped and still other areas that should be made purely commercial.

4. In areas of this district that are conducive to pedestrian traffic, consideration should be given to reducing setbacks to provide a walking-traffic-friendly atmosphere.
5. In order to encourage pedestrian traffic and to prevent obstruction of pedestrian access, it is particularly important to maintain the prohibition against front yard parking lots in front of businesses – now a part of Section 1000.

## *Commercial*

### *Intent*

This plan provides a truly “business-friendly” environment for current and future commercial enterprises in Rockport in order to: broaden the tax base, provide employment opportunities, and potentially add goods or services desired by townspeople. In these Commercial Zones, where no new residences would be allowed, businesses would have reduced limitations in terms of noise, lighting, traffic patterns, screening requirements, etc. which would not be compatible with residential areas.

### *Background*

There are two areas (in addition to the current 916 “Industrial” zone, encompassing primarily the Five Town Transfer Station) where such commercial centers seem most practical in terms of favorable location from a business perspective, rea-

sonable area size, etc. One is around the location of the current Rockport Park Centre, west of Rt. 1 and just south of the Rockport Public Works campus, extending further south past Rockville Street (including Rockport Steel and Maine Gold), and stopping just past Plants Unlimited. This includes some undeveloped as well as presently developed land. The other would be at the intersection of Rt. 90 and Meadow Street (the new traffic light) and encompassing several lots on each quadrant of that intersection – about 15-20 lots in all. This is a relatively lightly developed area where creative and enlightened design could accommodate several light industry, warehousing, distribution, service or medium-scale (not larger than a 10,000 square foot footprint)) retailing businesses with minimum visual impact on the gateways to the town.

## *Commercial Recommended Building Parameters*

The ordinances of Section 1000 of the Rockport Land Use Ordinance should be reviewed carefully to see what aspects of the business-oriented stipulations should apply to these purely commercial zones.

## *Rural Intent*

This plan intends to preserve as much rural land as possible in an undeveloped state, so as to protect agricultural pursuits, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas (such as ridges, hill tops, or water views), the aesthetics of approaches to Rockport and opportunities for outdoor pursuits.

## *Background*

Rockport is blessed with extensive areas of presently open or very sparsely developed land, thanks to several important commercial and conservation organizations and to about 50 landowners who own properties of 50 acres or more. Aqua America Maine owns large tracts of land in the two watersheds feeding its primary and secondary reservoirs, Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond, respectively, connected by Thorndike Brook.

The Grassy Pond watershed area consists of 982 acres within Rockport (plus another 303 in Hope) and the Mirror Lake watershed area consists of 546 acres.

Coastal Mountain Land Trust owns four preserves and controls eight conservation easements for a total of 707 acres within Rockport, including the Harkness Preserve (24 acres) off Spruce Street and overlooking the harbor, the Sides Preserve (eight acres abutting Maces Pond, the Beech Hill Preserve (295 acres) protecting the scenic top of Beech Hill, and several other smaller but important natural, scenic and recreational spots within town (the tip of Beauchamp Point, the Ledges on Rockport Harbor, etc.). Maine Coast Heritage Trust controls Aldermere Farm, a scenic and educational treasure (136 acres) along Russell Avenue.

The Town of Rockport itself owns two conservation easements protecting the five acres of land between Lily Pond and the Penobscot Area YMCA complex, and approximately 140 acres of woods and fields at the top of Bear Hill. Both are monitored by the Conservation Commission.

In addition to these large and currently well-protected tracts of land, there are many individual landowners who share this plan's vision for retain-

ing as much as possible of Rockport's undeveloped or sparsely developed land, and are willing to cooperate in devising reasonable development restrictions in the Rural Zone to achieve those goals.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee understands that permanent conservation of land requires the investment of financial resources. Landowners need to be compensated for giving up the right to develop their property. Such compensation can be accomplished by various methods such as tax incentives, the purchase of land by municipal or conservation organizations, or the purchase of development rights. Rockport is fortunate to have a well-run land trust in its area – Coastal Mountains Land Trust – that is available to advise landowners of their options.

In the fall of 2003, the committee circulated to all Rockport households a survey to determine how residents feel about a broad range of issues, including those that were articulated during earlier meetings in the various neighborhoods and with committees and organizations. More than 640 questionnaires were returned, representing more than one-third of all households in Rockport. Of those respondents, 91 percent favored incentives to preserve open space, which encourages this plan to recommend the creation of a "Land for Rockport's Future" fund.

The arguments in favor of preserving rural land are not only for aesthetics and the preservation of wildlife habitat, but also economic in nature. It costs money to provide services to all areas of Rockport and rural land tends to be the most remote, therefore the most costly. The incremental cost of providing services to remote households is difficult to quantify precisely, but it is clear that this added cost is substantial.

Since 1993, Rockport has accepted approximately 10 miles of new roads for an additional operating cost of \$60,000 per year. This does not include the cost of additional capital equipment to service these roads.

## *Rural Recommended Development Parameters*

To meet the intent given above, the following described land in rural zones shall remain in its undeveloped state:

- That portion of parcels with sustained slopes 20 percent or greater.
- State and federal designated wetlands, including setbacks from such wetlands conforming to state standards and criteria set forth in water resources and riparian habitat maps and documents prepared by Maine's Natural Areas Program. Rockport should develop its own wetland ordinance to further refine and perhaps strengthen these restrictions for local conditions.
- State and federally recognized Wildlife Protection and Habitat areas.
- There will be a no-build zone (see page 63) above certain elevations on Pleasant Mountain, the west peak of Spruce Mountain, the east peak of Spruce Mountain, Ragged Mountain, and Spring Mountain.

*In addition, please note:*

- No roads within these zones shall be accepted by the Town of Rockport as town roads.
- There will be a site review process (see page 63) for houses built above certain elevations on the hills/ mountains north of Rt. 90, as well as for Dodges Ridge and Bear Hill south of Rt. 90.

The following development parameters have been crafted with the assistance of several thoughtful owners of rural land. We appreciate their good stewardship and enormous contribution to the beauty of Rockport. This plan allows low- density development that is appropriate for a rural setting. It is specifically written to help landowners keep development costs down by encouraging inexpensive rural roads that have no length restrictions. Therefore, the landowner will be able to access all of his or her property's best sites and these rural roads will be allowed to work with the contours of the land. The plan's formula is simple and clear to avoid the costly burden of surveys and engineering costs, as well as the time and expense of legal challenges. Rather than being more restrictive, this plan actually increases flexibility, decreases preparation costs, and we believe it will enhance the land's value.

The following development parameters apply to lots designated as rural:

The percentage of the land in each parcel that shall remain undeveloped shall be:

- For each 200+ acre parcel ..... 80%
- For each 50 to 199 acre parcel ..... 75%
- For each 0 to 49 acre parcel ..... 70%

*Undeveloped land* means land without structures or landscaping. Activities of agriculture and forestry may be conducted on undeveloped land. Fields are considered to be undeveloped and may be



## LAND USE

mowed as appropriate (2-3 times per year). Such undeveloped land may be owned in common or it may be owned outright by individual owners.

The remaining land is considered land available for development. Developed land allows for structures, driveways and roads, and landscaping which includes lawns. Developable land is subject to the following density restrictions:

The number of houses allowed in each parcel is calculated according to the amount of land available for development:

- For each 200+ acre parcel: one house per 1.5 acre of developable land
- For each 50 to 199 acre parcel: one house per 2 acres of developable land
- For each 0 to 49 acre parcel: one house per 2.5 acres of developable land

• Where developable land is contiguous and houses are sited so as to fulfill "clustering" criteria, a 20 percent density bonus may be added to the above.

### *Example*

Mrs. Lynn owns a lot of 100 acres, designated as Rural land. She wants to give the land to her children. First she applies the formula to determine how much of the land should remain undeveloped ( $100 \times .75 = 75$  acres). So, 75 acres are to remain undeveloped, which leaves 25 acres available for development. Mrs. Lynn then applies the density formula to see how many houses she can have on the developable land (25 divided by 2 = 13 houses\*). Mrs. Lynn has only three children so she feels comfortable that ten lots will be enough. She then considers how best to site the house lots on the land so as to maintain the beauty of the whole property.

Rural land is, by definition, irregular and hard to develop. Therefore we want to help landowners to find the most suitable sites on their property and we want to encourage roads/driveways that are appropriate to a rural setting. There will be no restriction on road length, so as to provide access to the building sites which are the most unobtrusive and most suitable. Also, there will be no requirement to pave roads in rural zones. Other design specifications for rural roads are:

<u>Specification</u>	<u>Up to 5 Dwelling Units</u>	<u>Above 5 Dwelling Units</u>
Minimum road frontage on private way	40'	40'
Minimum roadway width	12'	18'
Minimum width of shoulders (each side)	1'	2'
Turnouts provided	every 500'	every 500'
Minimum right-of-way width	40'	50'
Turnaround at dead-end	Circle or "T"	Circle or "T"
Minimum sub-base (heavy road gravel)	15"	15"
Minimum wearing surface	2"	2"
Maximum grade	15%	12%
Roadway crown	1" per ft. of lane width	
Storm water drainage	Approval of Public Works Director	

(\*12.5 houses are rounded up to 13)

*Please Note:* the amount of roadway used counts as developed land but does not reduce the number of dwelling units allowed. The more roadway used in a rural parcel of land simply means that less developable land is available for lots, but the actual lot size is not affected. There is no restriction on how lots can be configured, but obviously clustered lots can be served by less roadway compared to scattered lots. There is no restriction on minimum lot size except that the lot must comply with state standards.

### ***No Build Zone for Mountaintops***

The Comprehensive Plan Committee believes a large majority of rural landowners and Rockport citizens support the concept of a no-build zone for the mountaintops north of Route 90. The committee recommends that no building be allowed above the following elevations:

<b>Mountain</b>	<b>No Build Above</b>	<b>Summit Heights</b>
Pleasant	750'	1,060'
Spruce West Peak	800'	970'
Spruce East Peak	750'	835'
Ragged (including Southeast Lobe)	890'	1,200'
Spring	600'	910'

The above elevations appear reasonable to the Committee, but we further recommend that they be adjusted, as appropriate, by the Ordinance Review Committee (ORC) when it can more fully evaluate the terrain.

Also, Rockport should adopt its most favorable property tax policy allowable for land in the no-build zone. Such special tax treatment is justifiable because much of the land in the no-build zone is not developable, accounts for relatively few acres, and it contributes highly to the scenic value of Rockport.



### ***Site Review Process for Houses Built on Mountains Ridges and Hilltops***

Buildings built in elevated areas should blend into the landscape to minimize their visibility. The Comprehensive Plan Committee has worked with selected rural landowners to test the practicality of this approach and concludes that Rockport should initiate a site review process for houses built at the following elevations:

<b>Mountain, Ridge, Hill</b>	<b>Review Elevations</b>	<b>Summit Heights</b>
Pleasant	600' to 750'	1,060'
Spruce West Peak	600' to 800'	970'
Spruce East Peak	550' to 750'	835'
Ragged (including Southeast Lobe)	600' to 890'	1,200'
Spring	500' to 600'	910'
Dodge's Ridge	Over 400'	584'
Bear Hill	Over 300'	440'
Beech Hill	Over 350'	533'

Once again, the above elevations are reasonable to the Committee, but we further recommend that they be adjusted, as appropriate, by the Ordinance Review Committee when it can more fully study the terrain. The Site Review Ordinance should be written to include the following elements:

- Buildings that cannot be kept off a hillcrest or ridge should be limited to one story, up to a maximum of 22 feet in height.
- Rooflines should be compatible with the surrounding canopy of the trees and not severely interrupt the line of the hill or ridge.
- Building colors and materials should complement the natural surroundings.
- Tree removal within 200 feet of buildings should be limited.

We anticipate that the Ordinance Review Committee may want to amplify the above elements of a site review process and add additional elements.

## *Implementation Plan: Land Use*

<b>It is the town's policy to:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Formalize acceptance of new zoning structure	Submit to town voters for acceptance	Selectmen	June 2005
Establish new land use ordinances for all zones	Review and revise existing ordinances as appropriate for new zones	Ordinance Review Committee	December 2005
Encourage additional businesses in Rockport Village	Meet with business owners to explore what incentives are needed or ordinances (e.g. parking) revised	Selectmen	March 2004
Develop further village infrastructure for Rockville	Develop, analyze and prioritize list of infrastructure projects for Rockville – e.g. sewer extension vs. community wastewater disposal system; Route 17 crossing, sidewalks, incentives for additional businesses, etc.	Rockville Village Committee (appointed by selectboard)	December 2005
Develop further village infrastructure for West Rockport	Analyze costs of extending sewer line to W. Rockport vs. community wastewater disposal system.	W. Rockport Village Committee (appointed by selectboard)	December 2005
Enhance village infrastructure for Glen Cove	Review speed limits, plan sidewalk projects, tree plantings, community resources, etc.	Glen Cove Village Committee (appointed by selectboard)	December 2005
Establish ordinances for newly defined commercial zone	Review Section 1000 of the Land Use Ordinances for applicability to the Commercial zone and revise as appropriate	Ordinance Review Committee	June 2005
Establish building elevation restrictions for Rural zones	Analyze topographic maps, sight lines, etc. to determine reasonable restrictions on “no build zones” above given elevations in restricted areas	Planning Officer, Ordinance Review Committee	March 2005

# AGRICULTURAL & FORESTRY RESOURCES

This section provides recommendations to encourage and augment agricultural and other natural resource-based enterprises in Rockport. Recognizing that the rural landscape is not only a visual asset but the source of livelihood for those who work the land, Rockport must work to support the small, family farms and other agricultural-based ventures. To that end, Rockport needs to:

- Support farms and garden-related businesses with information about tax relief programs and other state and federal programs to keep agricultural land productive
- Adequately protect agricultural interests in the development and enforcement of local guidelines and ordinances

While farming has been an integral part of life in Rockport since the early English settlements, few farms are left today. Rockport has emerged as a community of villages, subdivisions, single-family homes, schools, and businesses.

There is, however, still room in Rockport for more farms, commercial forests, and agricultural enterprises. Farms can range in size and scope from the smallest backyard raising of herbs, vegetables, and fruit to larger cash crop operations supplying local farmers' markets and other retail outlets.

According to the Comprehensive Plan survey circulated to all Rockport households in the fall of 2002, 55 percent of those responding said the town should actively encourage agriculture and farming. Just 12 percent said forestry should be actively encouraged, while 38.7 percent said forestry should be actively discouraged.

According to the Maine Department of Agriculture, agriculture in the state has developed into a diverse industry. It is the largest producer of brown eggs and wild blueberries in the world. It ranks eighth in the country in production of potatoes and second for maple syrup. It ranks second in New England in milk and livestock production. The small, diversified farms across Maine supply

niche markets with organic produce and meat, value-added products as well as fiber products.

With the recent emphasis by the Maine Department of Agriculture to promote locally-grown food, and the desire by the public for more organically-grown produce, there are growing opportunities for farmers in Maine.

Maine considers fishing, farming and forestry to be the foundational industries on which Maine's economy and persona were built. While the dominance of these three industries has diminished, they still have a significant presence as they provided in 2001 8.3 percent of Maine's jobs and 9.6 percent of the State's Gross State Product.

Job growth has stagnated over the past 30 years in these industries, and while value-added growth has grown, it has not kept pace with value-added growth in other sectors of the Maine economy, according to the state's economic and community development office. The direct economic contribution of these industries underestimates their importance to Maine's people, economy and culture, as these industries are the primary stewards of the rural landscape, which, in turn, drives the state's vital tourism industry and the state's quality of place.

## *Farms in Rockport*

There are several blueberry operations in West Rockport, as well as small and large acreages owned by various families and individuals on which blueberries are cultivated. The land under blueberry cultivation is approximately 290 acres. The various farms and agricultural ventures, blueberry and otherwise include the following:

Spruce Mountain Blueberries, run by Molly Sholes, is on Mount Pleasant Street. Spruce Mountain Blueberries grows wild Maine blueberries, sells some fresh-pack, freezes some for the six blueberry products made in the kitchen, and sells some to blueberry processors.

Other blueberry growers in West Rockport include Veron Hunter, Jack Lane, Dr. Onni Kangas and Kristian Kangas.

Beech Hill blueberry fields are owned and managed by the Coastal Mountains Land Trust with advice from the Maine Department of Agriculture. That arrangement rests on the collaborative funding of the Beech Hill purchase in 2001, which included money raised through donations and through the state's Land for Maine's Future Program.

With expansive views across Penobscot Bay and up to the Camden Hills Park, the 295-acre Beech

Hill property provides opportunities for historic, agricultural and environmental education. The open fields offer the opportunity to continue the current organic blueberry farming operation and provide excellent habitat for some rare grassland bird species. The historic stone house on the summit, named "Beechnut," was built in the early 1900s and is of statewide significance. The property also has several miles of walking and cross-country ski trails for the public to enjoy.

Aldermere Farm, on Russell Avenue near Lily Pond, is a working cattle farm now owned and managed by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. In 1999, the late Albert H. Chatfield, Jr., put the 136-acre farm in trust, and Aldermere Farm continues his work of breeding and raising a herd of Belted Galloway cattle. The farm is permanently protected by conservation easements, and during the summer months, the farm leases fields on Route 90 for cattle grazing.

Rockport also has five nurseries and plant sellers: Goose River Greenery, on Main Street; Plants Unlimited and Hoboken Gardens, on Route 1; The Green Thumb, on Route 17 in Rockville; and Seasons Downeast, a nursery and composting enterprise on Meadow Street.

Avena Botanicals Apothecary, on Mill Street, maintains organic herb gardens, and runs its Avena Institute's teaching center, all of which borders a 6,000-acre wetland. The Avena Institute includes classroom and hands-on opportunities for students to better understand issues of biodiversity, seed saving, and ecological and cultural restoration along with various programs on growing and using medicinal herbs.

## *Soils*

Topographically, Rockport has miles of fertile agricultural and forestry land. According to mapped resources, Rockport's prime farmland lies within the Goose River Watershed, along Park and Meadow streets, Annis Lane, and down along the Goose River where it empties into Rockport Harbor.

Other prime farmland areas include the fields along Cross Street, Route 90, and up toward Beech Hill Road.

In West Rockport, prime farmland exists along Mt. Pleasant Street, in the West Rockport Village area, toward West Street Extension, and near Robinson Drive.

There are other areas of prime farm soil along South Street, in Rockville, and all along Porter Street. Rockport Meadows, Spring Lane, and the area between Vinal Street and Route 17 contain prime farmland.

Route 1 from the Rockport Park Center to the intersection of Pascal Avenue contains fertile soil, as does areas of Glen Cove and the Samoset Resort.

Types of soils particular to each region of Rockport are further examined beginning on page 55 in the Topography and Soils section of this Comprehensive Plan.

## *Forestry*

There are no large tracts of commercially-harvested forests in Rockport. However, as of 2003, there were 584 acres in designated tree growth. The total timber harvest in Rockport fluctuated in the decade 1991 to 2002. The largest harvest was in 1998, when 210 acres were cut over a total of six harvests; the smallest was 2002 when 32 acres were cut in a total of three harvests.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Farms are part of the New England landscape and character, and have helped shape healthy communities. This Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of agricultural enterprise, no matter how small, is to a community and therefore recommends the following:

- The town work to support small farm enterprises, including the development of ordinance language that supports the state's Right to Farm Law, which establishes a presumption of agricultural activities not being a nuisance if conducted according to best management practices.
- Educate farmers about farm, forest, and open space tax relief programs and other resources.
- Encourage the purchase of local food for local schools and institutions.
- Clarify how farmers and smaller ventures can participate or establish farmers markets and farmstands. The Maine State Planning Office provides model regulatory provisions for communities supporting agriculture. That language is included in the Comprehensive Planning Resource Package compiled in October 2003 and available at the town office.

## *Implementation Plan: Agricultural and Forestry Resources*

<b>It is the town's policy to:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Support small farm enterprises, including the development of ordinance language that supports the state's Right to Farm Law, which establishes a presumption of agricultural activities not being a nuisance if conducted according to best management practices.	The Ordinance Review Committee, with the help of the Maine Department of Agriculture and the Saving Maine's Farmland Collaborative Action Plan, will pursue crafting ordinance language.	Ordinance Review Committee	Dec. 2005
Educate farmers and foresters about farm, forest, and open space tax relief programs and other resources.	Rockport Office of Planning and Code Enforcement and the Town Assessors' Agent provide information to residents seeking guidance for property tax relief.	Rockport planner/CEO and Assessors' Agent	Ongoing
Encourage the purchase of locally grown food for local schools and institutions.	Interested citizens, in collaboration with school board committees and other agencies, explore strategies for incorporating local and regionally-grown food into local institutions.	Farmers, citizens	2004-ongoing
Clarify how farmers and smaller ventures can participate or establish farmers markets and farmstands. The Maine State Planning Office provides model regulatory provisions for communities supporting agriculture. That language is included in the Comprehensive Planning Resource Package compiled in October 2003 and available at the town office.	Ordinance Review Committee works with farmers and SPO to promote regulation that supports the marketing of local farm goods.	Ordinance Review Committee	Dec. 2005

# H A B I T A T

This section recommends strategies for maintaining and enhancing Rockport's natural habitat and healthy landscape for wildlife, plants, and people. Approximately one-third of the respondents of a town-wide survey distributed in 2002 said they ranked habitat as one of the most important elements of Rockport to protect. The town's rural setting, with all its natural features, is considered one of its most desirable qualities, one which citizens rate as important to protect and to preserve.

The intent of this section is to:

- Better assess the natural habitats of Rockport, as well as other unique natural areas, and their importance to wildlife and people.
- Enhance habitat protection for existing wildlife.
- Encourage conservation of habitat, which, in turn, provides additional recreational and hunting opportunities, as well as public access to natural areas.
- Minimize the impact of development on natural areas, resources, and wildlife habitat.
- Work collaboratively with surrounding communities to identify and protect wildlife habitat and natural resources.



## H A B I T A T

With its mountains, farmland, blueberry fields, wetlands, forests, lakes, and coastal shoreline, the rural nature of Rockport has offered varied habitat for a wide range of wildlife and plants. In turn, the wildlife and plants have contributed to the town's rural character and quality of life, which a large portion of residents say they want to preserve.

While the town has seen an increase of development over the past decade, there remains substantial habitat for animals and plants. Residents in many corners of the town report anecdotally of bear and moose venturing up along the Mill Street ridge, of fox trotting across a neighbor's back yard in Rockport Village, of deer moving through the Goose River Golf Course, of coyotes venturing down through the woods of Beech Hill, and of eagles circling over the fields and woods of outer Main Street.

However, their habitat is shrinking, and those animals that depend on large tracts of forest and fields are eventually pushed away by human activity. What's left are species that can adapt to a more urban/suburban environment – gulls, English sparrows, pigeons, raccoons, and skunks.

According to the Maine Environmental Priorities Project, 1997, it is no coincidence that almost all of the non-marine animal species on the Maine Endangered and Threatened Species List are native to southern and coastal areas of the state as those areas are under the most development pressure.

To illustrate the inter-relationship and depen-

dence of an environment: The disappearance of one insect species can lead to the extinction of the plant which depended on that insect for pollination, a plant that may be an essential food source for a bird or mammal. Changes in lake water quality resulting from road drainage, residential development, or poor agricultural practices can promote algae blooms, change lake water temperature, and the assembly of fish species supported by the lake. Finally, the lake as a drinking water, swimming, or recreational resource can diminish.

The most profound effect of development on habitat is the fragmentation of the landscape into smaller and smaller blocks. As development along roads increases, animal movement between remaining adjacent blocks of open space becomes all but impossible for most wildlife species. When natural habitat is lost or degraded, the landscape that is part of Rockport's heritage is also lost.

It is not development alone that destroys habitat, it is the pattern of poorly planned development that is the culprit. It is the fragmentation that comes with new roads, utility corridors, buildings, and parking lots that breaks the landscape into smaller and smaller blocks.

As Rockport shapes its vision for the next decade, it should balance growth with the protection of natural resources for wildlife, recreation, hunting, and sustainable forestry and agriculture. That goal includes identifying and protecting more of the town's riparian habitat, its large, unfragmented forest blocks, and agricultural lands.

## ***Rockport's Natural Areas***

In Book II of this Comprehensive Plan, the Natural Resources Section outlines in detail the biological diversity that has thrived in the varied landscapes of this town. Rockport is unique in that it harbors many watersheds, lakes, wetlands, woods, hilltops, and mountains, as well as diverse marine environments from mudflats to rocky cliffs.

Consequently, there is a diverse population of birds, animals, and plants living in an array of habitats that range from forested wetlands to clam flats to lakeside swamps to deer wintering areas on the sides of Ragged Mountain.

Recent research has indicated that vernal pools, although small and temporal, are some of the most productive wetlands. The amphibians and invertebrates that depend on vernal pools in turn support a vast array of other species. While new information has begun to detail the importance of many of these pools, it has also become clearer that the size and temporal nature of vernal pools make them quite vulnerable to development pressure.

While Rockport has data about its natural areas, there is not enough documentation of how wildlife moves around the area along the coast, through the forests and farms, and waterways.

## ***Strategies for Protecting Habitats***

Wetlands – bogs, marshes, swamps, salt marshes, forested wetlands, and vernal pools – represent some of the most productive natural areas for all kinds of wildlife, including waterfowl, migratory birds, frogs, turtles, amphibians, snakes, fish, and shellfish.

Rockport currently requires new developments comply with its shoreland zoning ordinances, which are based on the state's shoreland zoning law. Areas identified on Rockport's Shoreland Zoning Map indicate where in town structures cannot be built within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high water line of great ponds and tidal waters; within 75 feet of the upland edge of coastal wetlands and non-forested freshwater wetlands greater than 10 acres in size; and within 75 feet of the normal high water line of streams.

With the ability to mitigate wetlands disruption in upland areas, however, potentially valuable habitat can be lost during the permitting process. Rockport needs to better define its habitat, and decide what habitat needs to be preserved before deciding what land to develop.

## ***Designated Doesn't Mean Protected***

Although the State of Maine and the federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated “essential” and “significant” wildlife habitats, as well as animals or habitat considered “rare” or “species of special concern,” those habitats are not ensured from being disrupted through development. While any project within a state-designated “essential habitat” may require a state permit, the subsequent review by Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife rarely stops development.

Because Rockport has unique and varied landscapes that are home to uncommon species, ranging from rare dragonfly habitats around Chickawaukie Lake to the stony heath on the sides of Ragged Mountain to American Chestnut groves in Rockport Village, they are not immune to pressures of a growing human population. Rockport is also home to more common, yet no less important species, such as deer, which have a wintering area on the sides of Ragged Mountain, and fox, bear, migratory and residents birds and waterfowl.

## ***Working with Camden, Hope, Warren, and Rockland***

Rockport and the surrounding communities share common watersheds, waterways, landscapes, and resources — Oyster River Watershed, Ragged Mountain, Glen Cove, and Chickawaukie Lake. The beauty of the landscape alone draws new residents each year. To ensure that the region's beauty does not erode, Rockport needs to work with its neighbors to anticipate residential and commercial growth and to coordinate planning so that the region develops harmoniously and that common goals are articulated.

### *Public Opinion*

According to the Comprehensive Plan survey circulated to all Rockport households in the fall of 2002, 64.7 percent of those responding considered the town's scenic beauty a very important reason for living here. The survey also asked Rockport residents their opinion of what areas of the town deserves special protection by the town.

Water resources and wildlife habitats were mentioned as deserving special protection by at least two thirds of the respondents, and together accounted for 18 percent of all the items checked by respondents (see survey in the appendix to this document). Other popular choices were ocean-front, scenic views, historical sites or structures, wetlands, hilltops and ridgelines, and lakefront, all of which were mentioned by more than half of the

respondents. Rockport residents indicated a desire to conserve many features and areas of their town: The typical number of items checked was almost eight.

### *Working with the Maine Department of Transportation*

Because Rockport is divided by three of Maine's primary highways, there are many areas where traffic meets habitat on a daily basis. While the DOT discourages strip development, the town of Rockport has, in the past, designated its growth areas along those highways. Congestion and habitat fragmentation has occurred.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Document and assess the natural areas of Rockport in relation to the wildlife, and coordinate with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to complete full inventories of species and habitat. The community will be involved in this process, and residents will be encouraged to record and submit anecdotal evidence about the movement of different species through their neighborhoods and adjacent towns. This will establish the first step in identifying potential wildlife corridors\*, through which the wildlife will be able to migrate. Identified vernal pools will be made available to the Code Enforcement Officer.
- Establish a local process to evaluate cumulative development as it relates to habitat loss. Town recreation committee members, local land trusts, and conservation organizations should discuss combining riparian habitat conservation with recreational access to water or other natural resources.
- Establish a Land for Rockport's Future Fund, funds from which can be used for habitat protection. This can be done in conjunction with the program in Gifting outlined in the Financial Section of this plan; i.e., include a land bank account that will be funded annually and spent according to a specific set of guidelines for the acquisition of habitat and open space lands.

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\* Wildlife corridors are sections of habitat, or travel lanes, that may be used by animals to travel from one habitat block to another. Corridors may also serve as habitat themselves; link habitats that were originally connected, minimize pollution by preventing run-off into a body of water; and provide recreation for people. An example of a wildlife corridor is a buffer — the riparian area — alongside streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, and wetlands.

## H A B I T A T

- Direct the grant writer (see Financial Section of this plan) to pursue private foundation funding, as well as state funding through the Department of Conservation's Land and Water Fund; Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund; and the Land for Maine's Future Program. Information about federal grants can be obtained through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Coastal Program (see appendix). Non-profits that obtain and manage habitat include the Coastal Mountains Land Trust, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and the Nature Conservancy.
- Develop a local wetlands ordinance to better protect water resources, as well as significant and essential wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive areas around rare and exemplary natural communities, vernal pools, wetlands, streams, and brooks. Currently, the state is developing a model wetlands ordinance model for towns.
- Require developers/landowners to consult with the Maine Natural Area Program or the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife prior to submission of large-scale development (subdivision) applications in non-designated growth areas to determine potential habitat impacts.
- Actively engage property owners in habitat education, either by distributing fact sheets particular to Rockport about rare plants and habitat, and make available for residents the information and maps provided with the "Beginning with Habitat" documents prepared for Rockport by the Maine Natural Area Program.
- Review current standards, identified resources, and definitions for the Streams and Wetlands District and propose amendments to the zoning ordinance and official zoning map using the information provided with "Beginning with Habitat," or any other recognized and respected documentation.
- Educate the Planning Board and Code Enforcement Office on known significant habitats, as provided with the "Beginning with Habitat" project.
- Reduce impacts on habitats and landscape by addressing and controlling light pollution.
- Establish a four-town committee that addresses the conservation of large habitat blocks that cross town lines. That committee will discuss goals and consistent regulations for shared waterways and watersheds and use the "Beginning with Habitat" documents prepared for each of their communities as a baseline and guideline for collaborative work.
- Pursue with the DOT the identification of land that runs through habitat along the highways to be acquired under the DOT's access management rights program. If the habitat is riparian in nature (home to turtles and amphibians) the DOT should be encouraged by the town to create wildlife corridors in the rebuilding of the highways.

## *Implementation Plan:Habitat*

<b>It is the town's policy to:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Assemble more habitat data, wildlife tracking, augment local knowledge of wetlands and vernal pools in order to increase protection and awareness of these issues.	The Rockport Conservation Commission will lead this project, with the help of interested community members. This will also involve the collaboration of IF&W. Compiled data will reside in the Rockport Planning Office, and the town planner will work with developers to avoid disrupting potential wildlife corridors.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
Establish a local process to evaluate cumulative development as it relates to habitat loss.	Town recreation committee members, local land trusts, and conservation organizations discuss combining riparian habitat conservation with recreational access to water resources.	Combined committee effort of harbor committee, recreation committee, and conservaton commission	Ongoing
Establish a Land for Rockport's Future Fund for habitat protection.	This can be done in conjunction with the program in Gifting outlined in the Financial Section of this plan; i.e., include a land bank account that will be funded annually and spent according to a specific set of guidelines for the acquisition of habitat and open space lands.	Selectmen	2004-ongoing
Pursue private foundation funding, as well as state funding	Funding sources include the Department of Conservation's Land and Water Fund; Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund; and the Land for Maine's Future Program. Information about federal grants can be obtained through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Coastal Program. Non-profits that obtain and manage habitat include the Coastal Mountains Land Trust, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and the Nature Conservancy.	Grant writer (see Financial Section of this plan)	2004-Ongoing
Establish a four-town committee that addresses the conservation of large habitat blocks that cross town lines.	The committee will discusses goals and consistent regulations for shared waterways and watersheds and use the "Beginning with Habitat" documents prepared for each of their communities as a baseline and guideline for collaborative work.	Town manager and selectmen form the committee and set goals	2004-Ongoing
Rockport and the DOT pursue identifying land along state highways to be acquired under the DOT's access management rights program.	If the habitat is riparian in nature (home to turtles and amphibians) the DOT be encouraged by the town to create wildlife corridors in the rebuilding of the highways.	Conservation Commission and town manager	2004-Ongoing
Develop a wetlands ordinance	To strengthen protection of wetlands smaller than 10 acres in size.	Ordinance Review Committee	Fall 2005
			Fall 2004

# WATER RESOURCES

This section recommends strategies for maintaining and promoting healthy water resources in Rockport, recognizing that watersheds, lakes, streams, and underground aquifers do not adhere to town and county lines.

The intent of this section is to:

- Enhance the health of a community through protection of water resources
- Ensure that non-point source pollution does not harm existing and future water supplies, freshwater and salt-water habitat, and coastal fisheries.
- Encourage a regional approach to water resource planning and management.



## *Rockport's Water Supply*

While quiet and often unnoticed, Rockport's water resources are crucial to a healthy community. As Rockport grows, the need to identify, plan for future use of drinking water, and protect the town's water resources becomes more imperative. Although it seems that water is in ample supply in Maine, the drought of 2002 indicated that water for drinking, washing clothes, dishes, and cars, and watering gardens can dry up drastically, and quickly.

In March 2003, the United Nations projected that by 2020, the average water supply per person worldwide is expected to be a third smaller than now. While it may be unlikely that Maine and Rockport be included in such dire predictions, nevertheless, prudent planning in this decade can help ensure that Rockport citizens over the next century have enough water to use in the way citizens now enjoy.

Rockport has no identified aquifers, and residents not hooked into the Aqua America Maine (formerly Consumers Maine Water Company) systems obtain their water from wells. Town records estimate that approximately half of Rockport's households obtain water from wells, the other half are tied into the Aqua America Maine system.

Aqua America Maine is owned by the Philadelphia-based publicly-held Aqua America Corporation, which is the nation's largest U.S.-based, investor-owned water utility, providing water and wastewater services to approximately two million residents in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, New Jersey, Maine, and North Carolina.

Currently, Aqua America Maine, with local offices on Route 17 in Rockport, draws water from Grassy Pond and Mirror Lake and distributes it through 7,300 service connections (in 1990, Aqua America Maine had 7,000 connections) to 22,000 customers. The Town of Rockport represents 17 percent of this customer base.

Water is transferred from Grassy Pond through Mirror Lake via a pumping system. The combined safe yield capacity of these supplies is 4.2 million gallons per day, according to Aqua America. The current daily demand is 3.1 million

gallons per day. Aqua America projects that the available supply capacity will meet regional needs for 20 to 40 years.

Chickawaukie Lake is an emergency, non-potable back-up source for Aqua America. An intensive local-state effort to rid Chickawaukie Lake of phosphorous was undertaken in 1992. Today the lake is cleaner because of that effort, but it remains at risk for pollution.

In 1990, Aqua America pumped 1.130 billion gallons and in 2002 pumped 1.131 billion gallons – an increase of 4 percent over a 10-year period.

## *Quality and Health of Water*

Planning and protecting water resources also preserves the health, diversity, and public uses of watersheds, lakes, and ponds for fishing and swimming, and boating. Because wetland ecosystems are so intertwined with adjacent lands, the value of nearby uplands also need the attention of landowners. Public awareness and knowledge are essential to promote protection and to create an ethic of stewardship, as existing regulations cannot protect whole systems.

## *Rockport Lakes and Ponds Are on Maine's Protection List*

Under the Site Location of Development Act Title 38 M.R.S.A, Section 480-D (effective July 1, 1997) and under the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Stormwater Management Rules (effective January 1, 1998), the DEP placed all of Rockport's great ponds – Chickawaukie Lake, Grassy Pond, Lily Pond, Mace's Pond, Mirror Lake, and Rocky Pond – on its 1997 Non-Point Source (NPS) Control Program list. ([www.state.me.us/dep/blwq/l&whome2.htm](http://www.state.me.us/dep/blwq/l&whome2.htm))

Additionally, Hosmer Pond, in Camden, which is the source water for the Goose River Watershed, is on the list. And, the list includes portions of the St. George River's coastal wetlands, into which the Chickawaukie Lake feeds.

The objective of the list is to identify waters to help direct non-point source water pollution control efforts. The list consists of 180 lakes out of a total of 2,314 significant lakes in Maine. Listed waterbodies have both significant value from a regional or statewide perspective, and water quality

that is either impaired, or threatened to some degree due to nonpoint source water pollution from land use activities in the watershed. They are considered to be waterbodies most at risk from development and are sensitive or threatened regions or watersheds.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage the acquisition and conservation of open space near and around water supplies, such as Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond (currently resources of Aqua America Incorporated).
- Conduct a hydrogeological study of Rockport to determine sufficiency of local water supply for private wells. The Maine Geologic Survey has provided Rockport with maps that indicate the depth, yield, and other attributes of existing wells. This information is collected in the Comprehensive Planning Resource Package available at the Rockport office of planning.
- Require that new developments and single-family homes be subject to non-point source pollution control standards and provide education about non-point source pollution to property owners.
- Encourage building site design specifications that reduce and modify parking requirements to reduce the amount of impervious surface. Encourage the use of porous paving blocks.\*
- Maintain natural buffers along roadsides to assist in trapping and absorbing runoff.
- Maintain strict construction site erosion control measures for construction sites and road upgrades and construction.
- Establish a regional approach to water protection, planning, and management with area towns (See recommendation in Habitat Section). This effort would systematically and periodically inform the selectmen about the health of Rockport's great ponds. Rockport would participate in regional water quality efforts and work with Aqua America, Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Maine Department of Transportation (public works practices) and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection on water quality issues.
- Pursue grants, such as the Maine Shore Stewards and Coastal Program, to survey watersheds and assess for nonpoint sources of pollution, nonpoint source pollution education, citizen monitoring work, and watershed planning. Promote the appreciation, stewardship and voluntary protection of wetland resources by private landowners, and Rockport and the surrounding towns. Contact Todd Janeski at the Maine Coastal Program at (207) 287-3261 or [Todd.Janeski@maine.gov](mailto:Todd.Janeski@maine.gov)
- Pursue Land and Water Conservation Fund grants for acquisition and/or development of public outdoor facilities. Contact the Grants and Community Recreation Division, Bureau of Parks and Lands, 22 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333; 207-287-2163.
- Require that the use of herbicides on town-owned property be kept to a minimum, if needed at all.

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\* Paving blocks are cement or plastic grids with gaps between them. Paving blocks make the surface more rigid and gravel or grass planted inside the holes allows for infiltration) to allow water to be absorbed rather than running off, and the use of filtration boxes (sand, peat and coarse gravel used to filter out bacteria and other contaminants to remove pollutants).



## *Implementation: Water Resources*

<b>It is the town's policy to:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Encourage the acquisition and conservation of open space near and around water supplies, such as Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond (the source of Aqua America's water supply).	The Rockport Conservation Commission will work with the Coastal Mountains Land Trust and Consumers Maine Water Company to identify critical areas.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
Conduct a hydrogeological study of Rockport areas that are in unserviced growth areas to determine sufficiency of local water supply.	Rockport Planning Office. Funding for this can be acquired by applying for grants from, but not exclusively, the Maine Shore Stewards and Coastal Program; Contact Todd Janeski at the Maine Coastal Program at (207) 287-3261 or Todd.Janeski@maine.gov  And, the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Contact the Grants and Community Recreation Division, Bureau of Parks and Lands, 22 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333; 207-287-2163.	Rockport Planner	2005
All new developments and single-family homes be subject to tighter non-point source pollution control standards.	Rockport Ordinance Review Committee will research and draft new standards.	Ordinance Review Committee	2005
Encourage building site design specifications that reduce and modify parking requirements to reduce the amount of impervious surface.	Rockport Ordinance Review Committee and the Rockport planner to research and integrate new standards.	Ordinance Review Committee	2005
Establish a regional committee to water protection, planning, and management with area towns (See recommendation in Habitat Section).	The committee will discuss goals and consistent regulations for shared waterways and watersheds and use the "Beginning with Habitat" documents prepared for each of their communities as a baseline and guideline for collaborative work.	Town manager and selectmen form the committee and set goals	2005
Provide information about non-source point pollution to property owners and the town.	Deliver ongoing information and workshops about pollution of water supplies, how homeowners and businesses can diminish pollution, and raise awareness of herbicide and pesticide effects on water supplies.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing

# MARINE RESOURCES

The intent of this section is to:

- Preserve and improve water access for Rockport residents and maintain access for commercial fishermen.
- Maintain the scenic qualities of Rockport's 14-mile coastline.
- Restore marine resources, such as clam flats and wildlife habitat.
- Celebrate Rockport Harbor's history as a working waterfront and social center.
- Encourage a mix of commercial and recreational activities and appropriate associated fees, which will mitigate the cost of town services provided to the harbor.
- Encourage children and students to use the harbor and coastline as a learning experience.

Rockport has an long and scenic coastline. The area is geologically complex with a variety of watersheds, floodplains, and habitats. The coastline is a study in biodiversity. Since 1993, there have been a number of new homes sited along the shorefront. Not all of those houses have been sited in a sensitive manner, and pressure for further development appears to be increasing.

### ***Rockport Harbor***

Rockport Harbor is relatively protected from dangerous east/northeast storms but exposed from the southwest, which is the prevailing wind direction during the fair weather of summer. Therefore, Rockport Harbor is not a particularly comfortable anchorage for visiting yachtsmen.

The head of the harbor is physically narrow and confined with relatively little room for docking facilities. Harbor topography is rugged, which restricts the amount of commercial and recreational activity that can be accommodated. Therefore, due to limited space, Rockport's challenge is how to manage a far greater demand for its harbor facilities than can be accommodated.

The harbor is a cost center for the town with operating costs that are largely balanced by fees if costs associated with the Harbormaster's building are excluded. The Town's 2002 budget called for estimated revenues of \$57,525 and estimated expenses of \$67,011. Mooring fees of \$20,575 account for approximately 30 percent of the estimated budget. Winter boat storage fees account for another 10 percent of the budget and a modest fee increase of 15 percent across the board would bring the Harbor's operating budget into balance. However, it should be noted that the Harbor provides Rockport with an enormous financial benefit in the form of property taxes and Rockport Marine provides the community with 50 year-round jobs. Management estimates that approximately eight Rockport Marine employees live in Rockport. The actual operating budget for the Harbor has little relationship to the intangible benefits which the Harbor gives to Rockport.

### ***The Working Waterfront***

The Town of Rockport has a long history of protecting access for commercial fishermen at the Town Landing on the east side of the harbor. Fishermen have two floats exclusively reserved for their use with adequate space for 20 dinghies. The number fluctuates but currently Rockport has about 20 fishermen operating out of the harbor. They appear to have enough space for loading and unloading. There is no obvious space for additional fishermen but then it is always difficult for newcomers to break into an existing fleet. Fishermen also have priority in the allocation of inner harbor moorings. Rockport residents value the concept of a working waterfront.

Commercial recreation is provided by the schooner *Timberwind*, the yacht *Shantih II*, and yacht *Harvest Moon*. They serve paying guests with overnight and daily cruises from Marine Park on the west side of the harbor. Other commercial cruise ships would like to operate out of Rockport but there is no dock space available. The town receives approximately \$ 6000 in docking fees from all three vessels. It is estimated that between 20,000 and 30,000 visitors are attracted to Marine Park between June and October, and the number is growing. Maine's Office of Tourism expects visitor numbers to the coast will continue to rise steadily over time. Clearly visitors to the harbor spend money in the local economy and benefit Rockport significantly.

### ***Recreational Use***

Public recreation is hard for the harbor to accommodate. There are approximately 290 moorings allocated to pleasure craft and 34 moorings allocated to commercial craft for a total of 324 moorings. However, there are only 14 floats at Marine Park for the use of yachtsmen. More importantly, the Marine Park floats can only service 62 recreational dinghies and there is a long waiting list for dinghy space at the town office. Obviously, Rockport has a large harbor with a mooring capacity of more than 600 moorings but not enough docking facilities to service the moorings currently in existence. A launch service might help to mitigate this problem but the physical constraints of the

harbor are a fact of life which Rockport must acknowledge by maximizing the usage of existing facilities. It is estimated that \$50,000 is needed to replace aging floats at Marine Park. The replacement floats could be designed to allow more dinghies to be tied up at the floats.

### **ROCKPORT BOAT CLUB**

The Rockport Boat Club was founded in 1948 by 40 year-round and summer residents. Since that time, the club's membership has increased to the limit of the club's facilities.

The Boat Club is an important feature of Rockport Harbor, located at the head of the harbor on land donated to the town by Mary Curtis Bok Zimbalist specifically for the purpose of providing a site for a boat club. The Boat Club now leases this land from the town.

Club activities are both social and boating-related. Of perhaps the greatest importance is the junior sailing program that has been sponsored by the Rockport Boat Club since 1973. That program is open to children of members and non-members. Scholarships are available for children whose parents cannot afford the instruction cost. The sailing program is run on a break-even basis by the Rockport Boat Club as a public service.

### ***Public Access***

In addition to docking facilities and the boat launch ramp at the head of the harbor, public access is provided at several other locations including Walker Park; Goody's Beach; the east side Ledges, which is owned by the Dodge family and protected through a conservation easement held by the Coastal Mountain Land Trust; Aldermere Farm; and Clam Cove.

Public access to a scenic overlook of the outer harbor is also available at the Harkness Preserve, off of Spruce Street. It is maintained by the Coastal Mountains Land Trust.

Residents may not be, as a whole, well informed about the availability of water access points and how they can be used. The ability of Maine residents to gain access to their coastal waters has been a persistent issue over the past two decades.

Areas of the coastal trail system have been lost due to denied permission from landowners and, in some cases, new opportunities have been created such as the Aldermere Farm trail system which extends to water destinations on the east side of Beauchamp Point.

In 1999, Maine voters approved a \$50 million bond to acquire land for conservation and recreation, water access, and farmland protection. Ten percent of those funds (\$5 million) is earmarked for the Land for Maine's Future Board-administered Public Access to Maine Waters Fund, which is for the acquisition of small parcels of land that provide water access for boating and fishing.

The Maine Coastal Program also helps communities keep track of existing public access through a Right-of-Way Discovery Grant Program. Every year, the Coastal Program awards small grants of approximately \$1,000 to six to nine municipalities or local land trusts to research forgotten or overlooked public rights-of-way to the shore. Discovery grants are intended to help communities find and assert public rights-of-way to the shore, which may be lost by the passing of generations and changing land ownership patterns.

### ***Aquaculture***

Rockport is not a likely location for commercial aquaculture activities such as salmon pens and mussel rafts. We understand this to be the case because Rockport Harbor does not have suitable sites for aquaculture grow out.

There is uncertainty about the potential for clam production in Clam Cove. The continued pollution from the stream under Warrenton Road, and other sources, as well as the presence of predator populations, hold back the commitment of human and economic resources to clam restoration. A clam resource survey was conducted in Clam Cove in August 1997. Results were not encouraging in terms of the existing clam population (a highly questionable estimate of a total potential harvest of 47 bushels) and the presence of predators. Moreover, streams entering Clam Cove from the surrounding watershed remain polluted so that the area could not be opened for shellfishing even if a robust clam population existed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Evaluate existing water access points as to their capacity and quality of amenities, such as parking. If the evaluation indicates underutilized capacity, a brochure should be developed explaining how citizens and visitors can better use the existing water access points of Rockport. If the evaluation indicates shortcomings, the existing public water access points should be maintained and upgraded.
- Support and promote boating activities for children and adults, particularly encouraging Rockport residents to take advantage of what the Rockport Boat Club offers.
- Investigate and develop an expanded coastal trail system to the extent possible. The town should consider approaching property owners to negotiate legal access. When appropriate, easements could be purchased for the public and the town should pursue right of access through prescriptive use.
- Monitor the water quality in Clam Cove on a continuous basis under the guidance and with the Maine Department of Marine Resources and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in order to identify the sources of pollution. If the pollution can be eliminated, consideration can then be given to the purchase of seed clams and associated predator protection, and promoting the clam harvest using volunteer labor. The result could be a new (revitalized) recreational activity (non-commercial) for town residents.
- Periodically, Rockport should celebrate the history and beauty of the town's waterfront with a celebration primarily for its residents. For example, a family or community day, hosted by the Rockport Booster Club, could provide games for the children and interesting presentations for the adults about the town's history. The celebration could be held at the Marine Park in the fall when the summer's congestion has diminished and Rockport residents are looking forward to getting back together.
- Evaluate the harbor's docking capacity needs as it relates to mooring capacity. Commercial fishermen should continue to receive priority in the inner harbor but other mooring allocation priorities should be better understood and made available to the public.
- Establish a fund to take advantage of opportunities to acquire waterfront access and other property needs of the town. These monies could be leveraged by other funds such as monies from the Land for Maine's Future Fund (see appendix for resources) and the formation of a Land for Rockport's Future Fund.

## *Implementation: Marine Resources*

<b>It is the town's policy to:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of existing public water access points	Write report	Recreation Committee	June 2005
Encourage public participation in waterfront activities	Explain and develop Rockport Boat Club program benefits for Rockport citizens	Rockport Boat Club board and selectmen	2005
Document and investigate an expanded coastal trail system	Map for the public and create vision for the future	Pathways Committee	2005
Engage clam restoration expert	Survey Clam Cove with recommendations	Selectmen	2004-2005
Celebrate Rockport's working waterfront and harbor history	Hold appropriate events	Rockport Booster Club and sponsors	2005
Maximize the use of existing dock facilities related to mooring allocation	Upgrade Marine Park floats and clarify how moorings are allocated	Harbormaster and the Harbor Committee	2005
Make money available to purchase waterfront access	Create a Land for Rockport's Future Fund in the amount of \$250,000-plus	Town Finance Director, Selectmen, and many others	Ongoing

# SCENIC RESOURCES

This section recommends strategies for maintaining and enhancing the scenic qualities of Rockport, which are many and varied.

The intent of this section is to:

- Inventory Rockport's scenic assets
- Acquire scenic easements



In 2002, approximately 94 percent of the Rockport citizens responding to the comprehensive plan survey (see appendix) said they live in Rockport because its scenic beauty is “very important” or “somewhat important.”

In the survey, Rockport residents were also asked which areas of Rockport deserved special protection by the town. Two-thirds of those who responded indicated that water resources and wildlife habitats deserved special protection. Other popular choices were oceanfront, scenic views, historical sites and village areas, wetlands, hilltops and ridgelines, and lakefront. Of the scenic views to protect, residents suggested:

Glen Cove overlook  
 Rockport Harbor  
 Ocean views  
 Route 90 fields close to the intersection of Route 1  
 Ridgelines  
 Ragged Mountain  
 Rockville  
 Spruce Mountain  
 Bald Mountain  
 Chickawaukie Lake, the ponds, and hills  
 Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond  
 Farms  
 Beech Hill

As a town, Rockport has never officially designated scenic areas, although there are spots or landscapes that citizens informally and collectively refer to as important and treasured. They range from the Belted Galloways at Aldermere Farm to Rockport Harbor to the ridgelines of the hills of West Rockport. Mirror Lake, on the west side of Ragged Mountain, and the Glen Cove area with its views out to Penobscot Bay are also valued highly by Rockport residents.

There is a growing concern that Rockport’s natural heritage is eroding. Scenic vistas are at risk of being lost to development. As the town grows, the land will become even more valuable from many different perspectives. Commercial development is transforming the gateways to Rockport

along routes 1, 90, and 17, and while the town has taken proactive steps to manage sprawl, there are competing interests for various parcels of attractive landscape, especially those that overlook the ocean.

In 1992, Rockport’s Ad Hoc Committee on Open Space held a series of 14 meetings, engaging the public in a discussion about preserving open space in the town.

The committee concluded that it was vital to the future well-being of the town to: preserve open space in order to protect water quality; contain municipal costs and property taxes; provide future generations the opportunity for traditional recreation; protect wildlife habitat; and maintain scenic beauty.

To that end, the committee proposed several areas in town to be preserved. They included:

- Ledges on the east side of Rockport Harbor
- The watersheds of Grassy Pond, and Chickawaukie and Mirror lakes
- Land surrounding Clam Cove
- Undeveloped land along routes 90 and 1
- Beech Hill–Bear Hill corridor
- Land around Lily Pond
- Land around Mace’s and Rocky ponds
- Goose River corridor
- Pleasant, Spruce, and Ragged mountains corridor
- Indian Island views

In 2001, the Rockport Comprehensive Plan launched a “My Favorite Rockport” collection of photos, which highlights the beauty of Rockport’s landscape. The photos were taken entirely by Rockport residents, who were encouraged to submit pictures of their favorite outdoor spots in town. Those photos are included in the appendix.

Besides providing some aesthetic delight, these photos are valuable in that they reinforce and identify that which Rockport residents hold dear to their hearts: the views of the mountains, lakes,



open fields, wooded landscapes, historic buildings, and nature.

State of Maine law provides that any municipality may, through donation or the expenditure of public funds, accept or acquire scenic easements or development rights for preserving property for the preservation of agricultural farmland or open space land. The term of such scenic easements or development rights must be for a period of at least 10 years.

In 1999, the state also implemented a local option property tax reimbursement clause for historic and scenic preservation. According to the law, a municipality may raise or appropriate money to reimburse taxpayers for a portion of taxes paid under Title 36, Part 2 on real property if the property owner agrees to maintain the property in accordance with criteria that are adopted by ordinance that provide for maintaining the historic integrity of important structures or providing a scenic view.

Municipalities raise or appropriate money to reimburse taxpayers for a portion of taxes. The governing legislative body of the municipality should, based upon their comprehensive plan, adopt by ordinance, criteria that provides for designating historic structures and scenic views and for maintaining the historic integrity of important structures or providing a scenic view.

Historic structures and scenic views are defined by the state under the 1999 clause as:

- Historic structures: A property is qualified for inclusion under this section if, at the time the municipality reimburses the owner for a portion of taxes, one of the following apply: It is individu-

ally listed in the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966; it is a contributing property to a National Register-listed historic district; it is locally designated as a historic property, or as a contributing property to a locally designated historic district; and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission has certified to the local governing body that the property in question satisfies either A or B above, or that it believes the property is eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

- Scenic View: A property is qualified for inclusion under this section if, at the time the municipality reimburses the owner for a portion of taxes, one of the following apply: It is an area identified by the State Planning Office as having scenic value; it is a locally designated view or view corridor from a public place; it is a locally designated natural or cultural feature in an identified view corridor (i.e., churches, lighthouses, fields, mountains, islands, etc.); it is a locally designated part of a municipality that contributes to the character of the town (i.e., village square, historic sites, etc.).

A town's character is built on its landscape, and Rockport has a unique blend of mountains, farmland, and oceanfront, all worthy of recognizing as aesthetically valuable. For that reason, this plan recommends protecting scenic resources in a long-term and consistent approach.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish an Ad Hoc Rockport Scenic Areas Committee to lead and conduct a scenic resources inventory throughout Rockport, identifying historic buildings and landscapes (farms, old schoolhouses, and cemeteries); attractive settings (mature shade trees lining the roads, stone walls, open fields); views of water or distant hills; and recognize scenic areas, such as community gateways, roads, and vistas.
- That Scenic Areas Committee should explore the acquisition of scenic easements by Rockport under state and local law. The committee will also explore the ramifications of the local option property tax reimbursement clause for historic and scenic preservation.
- Explore the development of a regional plan with neighboring communities to preserve shared visual assets, including the investigation of reduced property valuation (“local tax credit”) as an incentive for providing permanent scenic easements.
- Work regionally with neighboring communities, MDOT, and the Region 5 Regional Transportation Advisory Committee on the proposed Gateway One plan, a strategic comprehensive plan for Route 1 to ensure that the rural, scenic character of the area is preserved through progressive transportation planning, open space acquisition, and community planning. See Appendix for the May 2002 “Plan for the Greater Mid-Coast Region, Transportation, Economic Vitality and Community Livability at the Crossroads.”
- Pursue highway access acquisition strategies with the MDOT’s Highway Access Acquisition Program to identify and purchase easements along the state highways for the protection of scenic character.
- Work with Public Works and the DOT to develop standards for treatment of Rockport’s gateways as identified on the future scenic resources map. Standards should address signage, maintenance, non-municipal signs and announcements, street trees, and lighting.

# *Transportation*

# TRANSPORTATION

This section recommends strategies for safe, calm, and efficient transportation within Rockport, reflecting the need for cars and trucks to move about productively. At the same time, the recommendations also recognize the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists, and that alternative forms of transportation will not only ease congestion but also encourage a healthier community.

The intent of this section is to:

- Maintain the existing network of town-owned roads so that they remain safe and efficient in light of the projected increase traffic counts.
- Establish a strong working relationship between the town and state concerning transportation issues, especially regarding the three arterial highways of routes 1, 17, and 90, which are primary highways of the Maine Department of Transportation.
- Encourage the town to plan for new roads that will facilitate commercial and residential development in the designated growth areas and alleviate the pressures of development on the rural areas.
- Ensure that Rockport taxpayers do not shoulder excessive long-term costs associated with accepting under town jurisdiction the new roads built by private developers outside of designated growth areas.
- Build a network of paths between the villages of Rockport, as well as to schools, institutions, and recreation facilities, to promote stronger community connectivity and healthy living for children and adults.
- Enhance and protect the scenery along Rockport's gateways and rural roads, further grounding Rockport's identity as an attractive, healthy, and liveable community.
- Establish traffic calming strategies to reduce speeding and the number of accidents by using such accepted methods as well-marked crosswalks, neckdowns, curbed islands, and signage.
- Establish a stronger regional planning effort with Rockland, Warren, Hope, and Camden to better manage the traffic flow on connecting roads and state highways.
- Encourage the study of public transportation in the midcoast.

## TRANSPORTATION

Because of Rockport's geographical location, tucked between Camden and Rockland and traversed by three state arterial highways, it is a natural pass-through for travelers and local traffic. As the midcoast grows, so will traffic along Rockport's own roads, as well as on the three highways.

In 1989, Rockport's comprehensive plan reported that traffic in Rockport had doubled since 1971. In 2002, traffic has more than doubled again, with the most heavily travelled town-maintained roads seeing almost a 70 percent increase between 1996 and 1998 alone.

This is a statewide phenomenon and Kathy Fuller, assistant director of planning at the Maine Department of Transportation, said in June 2003:

*"In the report, Maine's Transportation System, Status and trend Indicators of Economic Growth and Quality of Life, published in August 2002, the most important indicator of demand on the transportation system is vehicle miles traveled (VMT). In 2000, VMT was estimated to be 14.2 billion miles on Maine roads, which represents a 20 percent increase over the 1990 VMT of 11.8 billion miles. When*

compared with a 4 percent population growth between 1990 and 2000, it is easy to see that the demands on transportation are growing – almost exponentially."

There are no current plans by the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) to build a bypass around the Rockland/Rockport/Camden area; therefore, the town must anticipate and plan for more through-traffic. With increased population projections by the Maine State Planning Office, Rockport's residential traffic will also increase.

### 2002 Survey

In responding the comprehensive plan survey in 2002, residents clearly directed the committee to address growing traffic problems in town. Two-thirds of the responding Rockport residents wanted Rockport to have more influence in plans for the major state highways of routes 1, 17, and 90.

The survey results also indicated that while they were reasonably content with town roadway amenities, a plurality favored more pathways and bike paths.

Rockport lies in the MDOT designated Region 5, encompassing all of Knox, Lincoln, and Sagadahoc counties, all of Waldo County except Burnham, Troy, and Unity, and includes Brunswick and Harpswell in Cumberland County.

The population of Region 5 grew from 155,512 people in 1990 to 167,145 people in 2000, for a gain of 11,633, or 7.5 percent. Maine experienced a population growth of four percent over the same period. Population growth within the region was not evenly distributed, and tended to be highest in the smaller communities along the coast and lowest in the cities. Over the past 30 years, the region's population has grown from 112,387 to 167,145, a gain of 54,758, or 48.7 percent.

### Population Changes in Region 5 counties and towns

	1970 Census	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2015 Projected	% Change 1970-2000
Knox Cty.	28,968	32,877	36,264	39,618	44,269	36.8
Lincoln Cty.	20,537	25,691	30,357	33,616	37,999	63.7
Waldo Cty. towns	20,703	25,340	29,438	32,285	36,279	55.9

Source: RTAC Region 5 "A Plan for the Greater Mid-Coast Region," May 2002

# Rockport

Transportation Road Network: Traffic Volumes and Safety



Camden

Rockland

Warren

Hope

Union

## LEGEND

Perennial Streams  
Water

### TRAFFIC VOLUMES - LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)

LOS A  
LOS B  
LOS C  
LOS D  
LOS E

5916 AADT  
Traffic Volumes - Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) are from 2001.

### SAFETY - HIGH CRASH LOCATIONS

HCL Points (Nodes) (1997 - 2001)  
HCL Lengths of Roadway (Links) (1997 - 2001)

Level of Service (LOS), High Crash Locations (HCL), and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) are defined in the Transportation Section of this Comprehensive Plan.



Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission  
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Rockland, ME 04841  
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Prepared by Eastern Maine Development Corporation

MDOT's Level of Service data is meant for system analysis and should not be substituted for an engineering study of a specific corridor or segment of roadway which includes consideration and verification of all factors that affect the LOS value of the subject facility.

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Sources: MDOT and MEGIS  
Map created: July, 2003



## Access Management

In 2000, Rockport adopted into its ordinance its first access management standards, which apply to the town designated growth areas of the state-maintained routes 90 and 1. That ordinance regulates the distance between curb cuts along those two commercial roads, encourages shared driveways, establishes safe sight distances, and limits one driveway to each lot.

The MDOT strongly encourages access management along its highways, saying it: “Promotes community and environmental quality by supporting strong local planning. Livable places provide

well-planned mixed uses with opportunities for walking and bicycling to work, school, shopping, or banking. Building on the high-speed highways on the edge of a community can degrade historic downtowns, and increase reliance on the automobile. That over-reliance quickly clogs up Maine’s arterial highway system, which is intended to provide long distance connections between major business centers and employment opportunities in and out of state. Replacing that resource is too difficult and too expensive to allow unplanned access points to degrade its safety and function.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build on the town’s 2000 access management ordinance to expand and reasonably conform application of its access management rules from solely routes 1 and 90 to all roads in town. The purpose and function of the road must be considered. This provides regulatory standards governing the location and design of driveways and entrances.
- Encourage shared access (combined entrances) into campus-style sites for new business and residential developments on all roads. This criteria already exists in Rockport’s access management ordinance for routes 1 and 90, and should be applied to other roads in town.

Combined entrances will reduce the number of cars clogging the roads, in turn reducing the likelihood of accidents. Internal pedestrian and vehicular connections will link adjacent parking lots and driveways to facilitate deliveries and minimize turning movements onto the roadways.

*Limit Access Points, like this . . .*

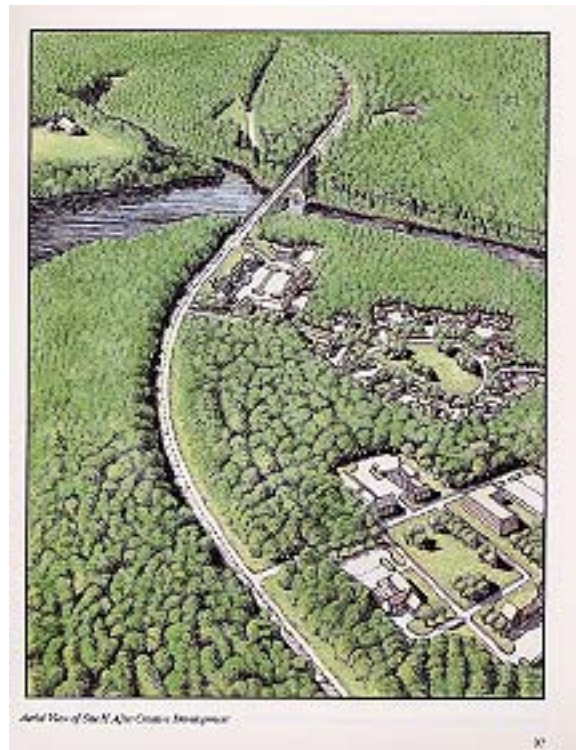
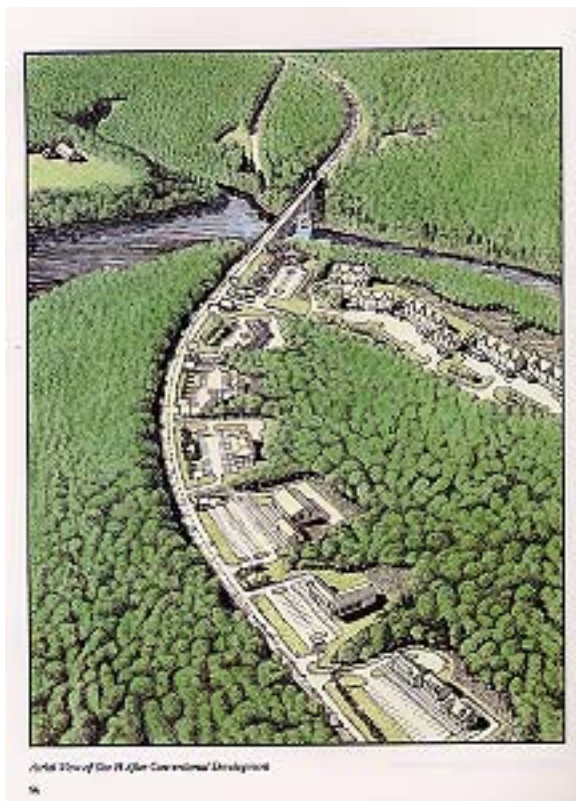


*Not this . . .*



## TRANSPORTATION

These illustrations show two types of development along the same stretch of highway. The first is conventional, with multiple curbcuts and parking lots that front the road. The second incorporates the same amount of commercial space but is designed to eliminate curbcuts and maintain a scenic drive along a wooded road. The campus-like development also contains its own mini open space and parking is screened.



From *Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley: A Design Manual for Conservation and Development*.



### *Speed Control and Traffic Calming Measures*

Speed limits often dictate how a road is used, and whether pedestrians and bicyclists also feel safe using a particular road. Currently, no road in town is zoned for speeds greater than 50 miles per hour. Nonetheless, speeders are often caught exceeding the limits.

Residents of West Rockport who live near the intersection of routes 90 and 17 attended a public meeting in June 2002 held by the Rockport Comprehensive Plan Committee and expressed concerns about trucks running red lights and noise level generated by engine brakes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reassess speed limits for town-owned roads based on residential density and safety factors. Residents along a particular street or in a particular neighborhood should be encouraged to participate in the process for determining speed limits that reflects the characteristics of a livable community — one in which residents can easily and enjoyably move about by car, foot, or bike without fear of accident.
- Work collaboratively with the MDOT, neighboring towns, and the Region 5 Transportation Advisory Committee to establish speed limits on routes 1, 17, and 90, as well as on the state roads of Pascal Avenue and Union Street, that reflect continuity, efficiency, and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and that reflect the concerns of neighborhoods.
- Assess and resolve citizens' concerns about particular intersections through a collaborative process by which the state, town, and residents can all participate.
- Study and apply traffic-calming measures in areas of town that are designated hazardous or uncomfortable to drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as home and business owners. Those measures can include:
  - a) designating one-way streets;
  - b) planting street trees;
  - c) building median islands;
  - d) narrowing pavement widths at intersections;
  - e) establishing crosswalks;
  - f) Limiting truck through-traffic to routes 1, 17, and 90, and prohibit through truck traffic from Pascal Avenue and Union Street.

### Rockport Traffic Survey Results: daily traffic count

Street	1996	1998	% Increase	2000	% Increase	2002	% Increase
South St.	1,130	1,620	43.4%	1,900	17.3%	1,850	-2.6%
Rockville St.	620	710	14.5%	680	-4.2%	810	19.1%
Mill St.	470	530	12.8%	590	11.5%	740	25.4%
Meadow St.	1,800	2,250	25%	2,250	broken machine	3,070	36.4%
Cross St.		300	xxxx	480	60%	700	45.8%
Main St.				1,210		2,140	76.9%
Park St.				6,520		5,240	-19.6%
Union St. (Smith's Garage)				new		4,100	

## *Maine Department of Transportation and Rockport Collaboration*

The MDOT classifies roads according to three basic categories, arterial, collector, and local. It also designates certain roads as “mobility corridors.” Rockport is in a unique position in that three state mobility arterial highways, routes 1, 17, and 90, run through the town. These arterial highways, considered assets by the state, were built by the MDOT with wider shoulders and straighter alignment for long-distance and higher-speed, free-flowing travel. Routes 1 and 17 are also mobility corridors.

Recognizing that the three highways are important to the state’s infrastructure, the town will work cooperatively with the MDOT to achieve efficiency. However, Rockport also recognizes that these three highways bisect neighborhoods and growing villages, sometimes to the detriment of community. There have been an increasing number of crashes between vehicles, sometimes deadly, along these roads, and there have also been bicycle/vehicle accidents.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish that MDOT and Rockport meet on a periodic basis to review concerns and plan for improvements along routes 1, 17, and 90, and Pascal Avenue, Union Street, and Old County Road; i.e., traffic lights, crosswalks, pedestrian overpass/underpass, and pathways. Because several of Rockport’s villages/neighborhoods (Glen Cove, West Rockport, Rockville, and Rockport Village) lie adjacent to the three highways, the town and the state need to define the transportation/safety/community issues and find common solutions.
- Work regionally with neighboring communities, MDOT, and the Region 5 Regional Transportation Advisory Committee on the proposed Gateway One plan, a strategic comprehensive plan for Route 1 to ensure that the rural, scenic character of the area is preserved through progressive transportation planning, open space acquisition, and community planning.

See Appendix for the May 2002 *“Plan for the Greater Mid-Coast Region, Transportation, Economic Vitality and Community Livability at the Crossroads.”*

- Pursue highway access acquisition strategies with the MDOT’s Highway Access Acquisition Program to identify and purchase easements along the state highways for the following purposes:
  - A) protection of scenic character;
  - B) promotion of efficient traffic flow;
  - C) protect wildlife travel routes or other natural resources at risk, and promote contiguous protected parcels;
  - D) protect taxpayer dollars by forgoing future widening of highways.

### *Cost of Roads*

The town of Rockport has not built a new road in approximately 20 years, except for the three-tenths of a mile of dirt roadway that accesses the Rockport Recreation Park on Route 90. Yet, each year town residents are asked at annual town meeting to accept under town jurisdiction new subdivision roads built by private developers. Those roads

carry associated costs, such as snow removal and plowing, sanding, resurfacing, and other maintenance requirements.

There are also growing expectations from a commuter population that the roads be plowed early and often so that people can get to work, which means the town’s public works department

## TRANSPORTATION

needs to work substantial overtime hours during the winter months. Additionally, there are the other associated costs: increased patrol routes for the Rockport Police Department, and increased responsibilities for the Rockport Fire Department.

Twenty years ago, the engineering firm Kimball-Chase recommended Rockport initiate a long-range road rebuilding project, and allocate \$250,000 annually until the project was complete. As of 2002, Rockport completed that project.

Aside from the 15.66 miles of state-maintained highways in Rockport, there are currently between 43 and 46 miles of roads that are maintained by Rockport Public Works. Of the annual public works budget (in 2002, it was \$892,632), approximately 78 percent is directed toward road maintenance, including road resurfacing and reconstruction. In 1973, there were 13 dead-end roads in Rockport; in 2002, there were 29 dead-end roads.

New roads accepted by the town since 1990 have all been subdivision roads built initially by developers. They are:

YEAR	NAME (and width, where indicated)	LENGTH
1991	Whitetail Drive	.7 miles
1992	Keller Drive Extension	.6 miles
1992	Lexington Drive	.3 miles
1992	Wellington Drive	.8 miles
1993	Rockport Woods Road	2,904 feet
1994	Sea Light Subdivision Road	1,839' x 26'
(This road was taken back by the Sea Light residents to become a private road.)		
1994	Rockport Park Centre Road	1,603' x 26'
1995	Robinson Drive	1,214'
1997	Kathy's Lane	1,050 x 20'
1997	Jeff's Circle	292' x 20'
1997	Beal Street	1,302' x 20'
1997	Brandywine Dr. (now Terrier Lane)	1,185' x 18'
1998	Bristol Drive	875' x 20'
1998	Winding Way	2,100' x 20'
2000	Fern Way	700' x 20'
2000	Spring Mountain Drive	723' x' 20'
2000	Rocky Ridge Road	1,588' x 20'
2000	West Wood Road	1,065' x 20'
2001	Ashley Terrace	1,459' x 20'
2002	Pine Wood Lane	402' x 20'
2002	Brandy Brook Circle	1,573' x 20'
2002	Ministerial Road	902' x 18'
2003	Reflection Pond Drive	2,200'
2003	Ocean View Lane	920'

Total: Approximately 7 miles

## TRANSPORTATION

Together, another 7 miles of roads were added to the care of Rockport public works. According to 2002 figures, the annual cost of maintaining a mile of road in Rockport is \$6,000 (\$4,200 for winter – snow and ice control, and \$1,800 for summer maintenance – ditching, signs, paint, mowing, and brush cutting).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- No longer accept under town jurisdiction those privately constructed roads outside the non-designated growth and village areas of town. Roads may be built that do not comply with town standards, but no such roads should be accepted by the town under any circumstances, and such stipulation shall appear on the plan approved by the Rockport Planning Board.
- Accept new roads only in designated growth areas, those areas of town where residential and commercial growth is intended.
- Require all new subdivisions to plan future access roads to any adjacent vacant land.
- Require new residential developments to build access roads to existing roads and to plan and provide for safe pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Subdivision roads that end in cul-de-sacs should be discouraged to facilitate development of inter-connecting roads for more efficient transportation networks and public safety.
- The town allows the continuation of existing sub-standard roads to preserve their character, to slow traffic, and to maintain neighborhood scale.
- Pursue funding for new access roads in the designated growth areas through MDOT and other mechanisms.

### *Alternative Transportation*

Obesity and illness have been attributed to sedentary lifestyles. Children no longer ride a mile or two on their bikes to school, nor do adults generally walk to work, or to shop. Parents drive children to and from school, extra-curricular activities, and sports, and there has been a reliance on the car as the only form of transportation. Reinforcing that has been the sprawling nature of housing developments and the construction of schools and facilities outside of villages.

While many of the impacts of suburban design focus on water pollution and habitat loss, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control connect these impacts directly with personal health. CDC Director Richard Jackson said: "The diseases of the 21st century will be chronic diseases like diabetes, obesity, asthma, and depression, that steal vitality and pro-

ductivity, and consume time and money. These diseases can be moderated by how we design, build, and maintain our human environment."

The CDC cites the connection between urban sprawl – which makes fewer sidewalks and bike paths available – and the recent surge in adult-onset diabetes. Since 1975, childhood obesity doubled and adult obesity shot from 47 percent to 61 percent of the population.

A healthy community, however, rejects the notion that its residents must only drive to their destinations. Children should be encouraged to walk and ride to friends' houses, the YMCA, library, and school, the elderly should feel comfortable walking to the store, and all residents should feel comfortable and safe on foot or bicycle.

In 1998, Camden and Rockport established a

## TRANSPORTATION

pathways committee that was charged with promoting and building multi-use paths connecting the towns and their institutions. In 1999, voters in both towns approved the construction of a pathway along Union Street using a \$350,000 grant from the Federal Highway Administration. The local cost was \$70,000, split equally between Camden and Rockport. Voters also endorsed the study of building a path to the new Camden Hills Regional High

School on Route 90 in Rockport. The committee in 2002 was exploring route options and studying other possible pathway development in the communities. The committee was also preparing a master pathway plan for the two town community that would map out potential routes and enable alternative modes of transportation for the one-third of our population that does not drive.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create and implement a master plan for a comprehensive trail and pathways system that connects Rockport's villages and institutions — public schools, libraries, recreation facilities – so that children, adults, and seniors can move about the town on foot, bike, or other modes without fear of being hit by a car or truck.
- Develop a plan to improve year-round maintenance and accessibility to sidewalks and paved pathways in high density village areas with emphasis on providing safe pedestrian access to schools, libraries, post offices and recreation facilities which provide services and activities throughout the year. Possible strategies to consider when developing a plan include, but should not be limited to, public works, volunteers, and individual homeowner responsibility.
- Continue working with Camden on a joint two-town effort to connect the communities by trails and pathways, and pursue discussions with Rockland, Warren, and Hope to explore similar efforts.
- Actively pursue government and private grants to assist in funding the construction and maintenance the trails and pathways.
- Research and survey Rockport's discontinued roads and rights of way that are no longer maintained by the town to determine which ones remain under town ownership and are still publicly owned.
- Work regionally to promote public transportation.
- Pursue state and federal grants to assist in funding the construction and maintenance of sidewalks in the designated village areas of Rockport. Connect those sidewalks with those pathways that will in turn be connecting the villages to one another.

### *Scenic Roads and Street Trees*

Rockport is recognized for its peaceful and rural landscapes, both inland and by the shore. Currently, it has no designed scenic areas, except for a state highway turn-off at Glen Cove, which offers views of Penobscot Bay. Generations ago, Rockport residents planted street trees with forththought of future generations, as evidenced by the trees that grace Route 1 along Richards Hill. Today, those trees create a boulevard-like appearance that makes

Rockport attractive. Currently, Rockport has no long-term road enhancement policies or plans, such as street tree planting. Its elm trees, aside from one still by the town office, have succumbed to disease and few new trees have been planted. Other trees have been lost to road widening and construction. Trees, properly placed and maintained, complement the area's natural beauty and help diminish a strip-like appearance on the highways.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct a scenic inventory of Rockport that includes viewsheds from its highways and roads. (See Scenic Resources Section on page 87 for more about scenic inventory.) The Conservation Commission can conduct a roadside scenic asset inventory of historic and cultural sites in Rockport. The groundwork of this has already been established with returns of the town survey distributed in October 2002 and the growing collection of "My Favorite Rockport" photos.
- Pursue grants and programs, such as the MDOT Community Gateways Program (see appendix), that help enhance local roads and highways, and fund land acquisition and easements along the roads and highways that have been designated scenic views and wildlife habitat by the town.
- Establish a long-term street tree planting plan and craft a tree ordinance, such as Camden's Shade Tree Ordinance. Project Canopy, a program of the Maine Department of Conservation's Forest Service and the Pine Tree Arboretum, helps Maine communities develop long-term community tree programs. Grants are available to local municipal units of government, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations for developing and implementing community forestry projects and programs. Project Canopy encourages communities and organizations to submit proposals for development of a street tree inventory, master tree plan, public tree ordinance, community education, tree pruning, removal, replacement and other community forestry projects.
- Work collaboratively with the MDOT and Rockport Public Works to plant street trees along routes 1 and 90 in accordance with MDOT guidelines to complement the area's natural beauty and diminish any strip-like appearance. This would include the development of a master street planting plan with the advice of the MDOT in recognition of the need to retain safety clear zones for routes 1, 17, and 90.
- Pursue designating Route 17 as a scenic byway.
- Establish a town road policy that reflects a need for safe access and the flexibility of standards for historic character, and natural and topographic features.



## *Implementation Plan:Transportation*

Program:	Implementation:	Responsible Party	Timeline
Access Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess Rockport's town-owned roads to determine where access-management standards are necessary to maintain safe and efficient travel.</li> <li>• Encourage shared access (combined entrances) on roads in the town's growth areas.</li> </ul>	Public Works Director	December 31, 2005
Speed Control and Traffic Calming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess speed limits on town-owned roads based on residential density and safety factors.</li> <li>• Work with the DOT and the Region 5 Regional Transportation Advisory Committee to assess speed limits on routes 1, 17, and 90</li> </ul>	Public Works Director and local residents	December 31, 2005
Rockport/Maine Department of Transportation collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet periodically with the DOT to review concerns and plan for improvements along routes 1, 17, and 90, including the future placement of traffic lights, crosswalks, and pathways.</li> <li>• Pursue highway access acquisition strategies with the Maine DOT's Highway Acquisition Program and identify possible easements for the protection of scenic character; promotion of traffic flow; protect wildlife travel routes; protect taxpayer dollars by forgoing future highway widening projects.</li> </ul>	Conservation Commission, Public Works Director, Rockport Police Chief, and Town Manager.	Ongoing
Reduce the cost of roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No longer accept under town jurisdiction those privately constructed roads outside the non-designated growth and village areas of town.</li> <li>• Accept privately constructed roads in designated growth areas, those areas of town where residential and commercial growth is intended.</li> <li>• Require all new subdivisions to plan future access roads to any adjacent vacant land.</li> <li>• Require new residential developments to build access roads to existing roads, to plan and provide for safe pedestrian and bicycle access, and to avoid building cul-de-sacs.</li> </ul>	Ordinance Review Committee	December 31, 2005

## *Implementation Plan: Transportation*

Plan for new town roads in villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for the municipal construction of new roads in villages in order to alleviate traffic on arterial highways.</li> <li>• Pursue funding for new access roads in the designated growth areas through MDOT and other mechanisms.</li> </ul>	Public Works Director, Town Manager	Ongoing
Alternative Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and implement a master plan for a comprehensive trail and pathways system that connects Rockport's villages and institutions — public schools, libraries, recreation facilities. The plan shall include provisions to improve year-round maintenance and accessibility to sidewalks and paved pathways in high-density village areas with emphasis on providing safe pedestrian access to schools, libraries, post offices and recreation facilities which provide services and activities throughout the year. Possible strategies to consider when developing a plan include, but should not be limited to, public works, volunteers, and individual homeowner responsibility.</li> <li>• Actively pursue government and private grants to help construct and maintain the trails.</li> <li>• Research and survey Rockport's discontinued roads and rights of way that are no longer maintained by the town to determine which ones remain under town ownership and are still publicly owned.</li> <li>• Work regionally to promote public transportation.</li> </ul>	Rockport Recreation Committee and the Camden-Rockport Pathways Committee	Ongoing
Pathways and Sidewalks  Scenic Roads and Street Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and construct sidewalks in the designated village areas of Rockport.</li> <li>• Pursue state and federal grants to construct and maintain sidewalks in the designated village areas of Rockport.</li> <li>• Connect those sidewalks with those pathways that will in turn be connecting the villages to one another.</li> </ul>	Town Manager, Selectmen, Public Works Director, Pathways Committee	Ongoing



## *Implementation Plan: Transportation*

Scenic Roads and Street Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a scenic inventory of Rockport that includes viewsheds from its highways and roads.</li> </ul>	Conservation Commission	2005
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue grants and programs, such as the MDOT Community Gateways Program (see appendix), that help enhance local roads and highways, and fund land acquisition and easements along the roads and highways that have been designated scenic views and wildlife habitat by the town.</li> </ul>		Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a long-term street tree planting plan and craft tree ordinances, such as Camden's Shade Tree Removal Ordinance.</li> </ul>	Ordinance Review Committee	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work collaboratively with the MDOT and Rockport Public Works to plant street trees along routes 1 and 90 in accordance with MDOT guidelines to complement the area's natural beauty and diminish any strip-like appearance. Rockport is to develop a master street planting plan with the advice of the DOT in recognition of the need to retain safety clear zones for routes 1, 17, and 90.</li> </ul>	Conservation Commission and the Rockport Public Works Director	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a town road policy that reflects a need for safe access and the flexibility of standards for historic character, and natural and topographic features.</li> </ul>	Public Works Director and Selectmen	2005



# *Public Facilities & Services*

HOUSING

PARKS & RECREATION

ROCKPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY

PUBLIC SAFETY

ROCKPORT PUBLIC WORKS

MIDCOAST SOLID WASTE CORPORATION

WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT

# H O U S I N G

## *Intent of this Section*

The policies developed in the housing section address siting issues that contribute to sprawl and lack of affordability, which, in turn, impacts the type of housing developed and the lot size offered in town. Specific land use issues, such as lot size, that relate to housing are found in the land use section. The policies and intent for housing in Rockport include:

- Encourage site houses in appropriate growth areas of town and on specific lots that do not detract from viewsheds and community character.
- Ensure there is a mix of housing types in Rockport including single family dwellings, duplexes, multi-family dwellings, co-op housing, and group housing.
- Strive to integrate affordable housing throughout the community, not designated to one given village, subdivision, or lot.

Generally, Rockport's housing is of sound quality with a mix of older homes, the majority of which have been fully renovated, and newer construction, which has been well maintained. The trend has been to invest in properties and raise the housing standards in town.

At least 30 percent of the total housing stock in Rockport consists of second homes. Those homes are concentrated in Rockport Village, along the water, and on the ridges, such as on Mill Street. Property tax revenue generated from those homes is estimated to be roughly 50 percent of the total property tax base. Owners of those homes place relatively little demand on municipal services; i.e., few or no new children in the school system. This favorably offsets the overall cost of municipal services that is passed onto year-round residents.

Year-round residents contribute approximately 30 percent to the property tax revenue, and the remaining 20 percent is collected from commercial properties.

Currently there is limited affordable housing in Rockport. What does exist is primarily limited to the mobile home park in Glen Cove and to mobile homes and modest houses scattered throughout town. There are no affordable housing developments in Rockport and no federal HUD subsidized Section 8 housing in Rockport. The majority of those units are in Rockland, with a few units in Camden and Thomaston.

Left to market forces, affordable housing would not exist in Rockport. The region attracts people "from away" who have resources generated in more robust economies, which

enables them to purchase real estate on the coast of Maine. The community is a desirable place to live, year-round or part-time, and with the advent of technology it is possible to conduct business from more remote locations with little impact on productivity. These new residents have the ability to purchase property at the higher prices, which has resulted in higher real estate costs throughout town.

The socio-economic shift in Rockport, reflected by an increased number of retirees, second-home buyers, and late career professionals, has put pressure on the housing market. Such pressures prevent certain populations from remaining in town, or from moving to the community. The trend has resulted in the inability of young families with children and many working people to be able to buy a house in Rockport for less than \$150,000.

Maine's Growth Management Act states that a municipality must ensure that 10 percent of all future development be considered affordable, according to Maine State Housing Authorities guidelines for Knox County. To accomplish this affordable housing objective,

densities must be increased, multi-family dwellings encouraged, and policies adopted that attempt to control market forces. The traditional village development model helps with affordability. To move the traditional village concept forward the town needs to assist in infrastructure development to allow for increased densities and consider more creative approaches to affordability, such as implementing a cooperative housing model and housing tax increment financing.

### Affordable Housing Defined

Affordable housing, as defined by the state, is decent, safe, and sanitary living accommodations that are affordable to lower income households and moderate income households, in accord with the following provisions.

An owner-occupied housing unit is "affordable" to a household if the unit's expected sales price is reasonably anticipated to result in monthly housing costs (including mortgage principal and interest payments, mortgage insurance costs, homeowners' insurance costs, real estate taxes, and basic utility and energy costs) that do not exceed 28% to 33% of the household's gross monthly income. Determination of mortgage amounts and payments are to be based on down payment rates and interest rates generally available to lower and moderate income households.

A renter-occupied housing unit is "affordable" to a household if the unit's monthly housing costs (including rent and basic utility and energy costs) do not exceed 30% of the household's gross monthly income.

**Cooperative Housing** – The cost of land makes affordable housing in Rockport difficult to achieve. Development of cooperative housing is one model that can provide affordable housing for qualified households that takes the cost of land out of the equation. The model is similar to the condominium model except the land is held by a land trust or affordable housing organization with development restrictions placed on the property that are reflected in the assessed value. Each housing unit is sold to an income eligible household and that household is responsible for a monthly mortgage based on the sales price of the unit, not the land, and a monthly coop fee to support maintenance of common areas. This fee is collected and managed by the organization that has ownership of the land.

**Housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** – To further encourage development of affordable housing, the town should utilize the Housing TIF that provides a tax incentive to a developer of affordable housing units. The Housing TIF would direct back to the developer a portion of the property taxes collected on those affordable unit or help finance infrastructure that was necessary for that development to take place. For more information about TIFs, see page 145.

In the Comprehensive Plan survey circulated to all households in Rockport in 2003, a number of people mentioned restricting development on the ridgelines and sides of hills. Siting a home has tremendous impact on the community. Protecting viewsheds is critical for Rockport to maintain its community character. The topography of town is an essential character that should be protected.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Team up 3 with Camden Affordable Housing, Coastal Community Action Program, Habitat for Humanity, and the Knox County Coalition for Affordable Housing in developing innovative affordable housing models.
- Create an organization, governmental or quasi-governmental, whose mission is to promote and develop affordable housing in Rockport.
- Encourage the development of affordable cooperative housing through ordinances and zone revisions.
- Place sales covenants on all affordable housing units to take advantage of the various incentive programs that ensure the property will remain an affordable unit well into the future.
- Create layered impact fees based on the type of development, incorporation of affordability, and infrastructure demands.
- Analyze and recommend necessary infrastructure to areas where traditional villages are proposed to allow for increased densities.
- Aggressively pursue grant funds and other innovative funding mechanisms to assist in the development of infrastructure and the building of affordable housing.
- Consider adopting certain design standards for affordable housing to maintain the character of the community.
- Allow developers who propose building affordable units in a subdivision to increase densities in the development (see zoning recommendations in the land use section on page 50)
- Restrict development along ridgelines and hill tops.

## *Implementation Plan: Housing*

<b>It is the town's policy to:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Expand regional effort to provide affordable housing opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint a town representative to participate in the Knox County Affordable Housing Coalition</li> <li>• Establish an ad hoc committee to explore collaboration with Camden Affordable Housing</li> </ul>	Town Manager and Selectmen	April 2004
Offset the rising town costs associated with increased residential development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define and draft an impact fee ordinance related to residential development</li> </ul>	Newly appointed finance director together with the advisor for grants	September 2005
Anticipate future development in the targeted residential growth areas and plan for infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete feasibility study for wastewater infrastructure expansion into outlying village areas of town</li> </ul>	Selectmen/Town Manager select engineering firm	June 2005
Expand housing development guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Craft new ordinances that outline land use policies, such as ridgeline development and design standards</li> </ul>	Ordinance Review Committee	November 2005

# PARKS & RECREATION

This section recommends ways to enhance Rockport's recreational opportunities. According to the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Survey a major reason people live here is for the quality of life. Naturally contributing factors to Rockport's quality of life are its various recreational opportunities, including its harbor, lakes, and mountains. Care and planning must be given to protecting Rockport's scenic beauty and enhancing its recreational assets. The section recommends strategies to:

- Preserve and improve access to areas of recreation.
- Designate areas of open space for recreation.
- Maintain and improve existing athletic fields.
- Identify areas for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, hiking, and biking.
- Establish more public access to ponds, lakes and the salt water.
- Maintain and improve community gardens, parks and playgrounds.



Rockport is home to many ponds, streams, and hills that provide access to a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. It may be necessary to assess how Rockport inventories compare with recommended standards of the National Recreation and Park Association.

Rockport's overall acreage is more than 12,750 with a population of more than 3,210. Of that, the Town of Rockport owns more than 48 acres that are designated for recreation use.

More than 330 acres are in conservation easements or preserves.

Through the efforts of many citizens over the past centuries, Rockport has a wide range of parks and recreational opportunities that many other towns do not enjoy. The entire midcoast area of Maine is considered an outdoor, as well as indoor, recreation destination, and Maine citizens, as well as tourists, participate in many activities here.

The Town of Rockport has enabled the creation of parks and recreation facilities, either by supporting the efforts through zoning or by helping to

raise money. During the 1990s, Rockport residents approved and helped to fund the establishment of Rockport Recreation Park on Route 90, with its ballfields and tennis courts; generously supported the acquisition of Goody's Beach, on the harbor waterfront; and donated money to purchase new playground equipment for Walker Park, also on the harbor.

Some open space and parks are privately owned with public access easements, others are town-owned, and still others are owned by land trusts, purchased with the help of state money and therefore, quasi-publicly owned.

Nonetheless, public waterfront – ocean, pond, and lakefront — access remains elusive, and its acquisition represents a goal of this comprehensive plan. As Rockport land increases so dramatically in valuation, it will only become harder for residents to maintain the privileges they enjoy: hiking through the woods, hunting in the autumn, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling, fishing, and swimming and boating.

## *Existing Rockport Recreational Opportunities*

### **TOWN PARKS**

**Walker Park:** 1.5 acres. On Sea Street, on the west side of Rockport Harbor, lies Walker Park, with picnic tables, small beach and rocks, and playground equipment.

**Cramer Park:** 3.85 acres. Walking trails and picnic tables along the Goose River, where it passes through the old limestone tailings before emptying into the harbor.

**Goodridge Park** (formerly Honor Roll Park): .45 acres. A small green space across from the Rockport College building and near the harbor, the park has several benches.

**Library Park:** .32 acres. Across the street from the Rockport Public Library.

**Marine Park:** 3.25 acres. Recently enlarged by the acquisition of Goody's Beach, almost an acre of shorefront with a sandy beach, the Marine Park is Rockport's primary harbor park, and which provides boat access to the ocean. The stone sculpture of André the Seal sits at Marine Park, as well as the historic lime kilns, and a steam locomotive, representing the historic lime industry that once dominated Rockport Harbor.

**Mary Lea Park:** .37 acres. A small, landscaped park between the Rockport Opera House and

historic brick buildings along Central Street, the Mary Lea Park provides short walking trails, granite stairways, grassy areas, flowerbeds, and benches. The park is dedicated to the memory of Lea Luboshutz (1885-1965), a violinist, teacher, and Rockport resident.

**Rockport Recreation Park:** 15.22 acres. A three-season recreation facility on Route 90, with tennis courts, ballfields, playground

Glen Cove Picnic Area: A voter-approved purchase of \$700 made in 2003, after the State of Maine decided to divest itself of this small piece of Clam Cove shorefront adjacent to Route 1 in Glen Cove.

## NON-PROFIT PARKS, FARMS, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS

**Merryspring Nature Park** is a privately-owned 66-acre (37.5 acres in Rockport) park that straddles Camden and Rockport. It is open to the public free of charge every day of the year from dawn to dusk. The park's mission is to acquaint, stimulate, and educate the community in all matters of horticulture; and to exercise and advocate sound principles of wildlife ecology and conservation in order to protect our natural environment. The park maintains walking trails.

Merryspring was founded in 1974 by Mary Ellen Ross, a local horticulturist who had attained national recognition through her mail order plant business, Merry Gardens. She envisioned creating a sanctuary where horticulture and nature could be studied firsthand. When the 66 acres which make up the Park came on the market, Mrs. Ross enlisted the help of many friends in the horticultural community and bought an option on the land. Merryspring Inc., a non-profit corporation, was formed; and a mortgage taken for the property.

**Aldermere Farm:** On the western shore of Penobscot Bay in Rockport, Aldermere Farm has been an area landmark for generations. Maine Coast Heritage Trust owns and manages the working 136-acre farm thanks to a generous bequest made by the late Albert H. Chatfield, Jr. Aldermere supports a world-renowned herd of Belted Galloway cattle and is permanently protected by conservation easements. MCHT is currently developing long-term stewardship plans.

The farm offers educational tours on agriculture and natural history topics, youth and adult programs, and cross-country skiing.

**Vesper Hill Children's Chapel:** 3.43 acres. The pine chapel sits high on a ledge looking eastward over Penobscot Bay. The grounds are landscaped with flowers, herbs, grassy knolls. The chapel was built on property formerly owned by Helene Bok in 1960 and is supported by the Vesper Hill Foundation.

**Beauchamp Point Scenic Byway:** Overseen by the Rockport Conservation Commission, the dirt road that extends around Beauchamp Point is a favorite for walkers, runners, and bicyclists. It is open to cars in the summer, but closed during winter months. The town maintains the road during the summer.

**The Ledges:** Off of the Beauchamp Point road are the ledges, prominent rocks that are popular for picnicking and ocean swimming.

**Harkness Preserve:** 21.25 acres. Named in honor of one of the first settlers in this area and a revolutionary war hero, the Harkness Preserve, on the west side of Rockport Harbor, was donated to the Coastal Mountains Land Trust by Mary Cramer and the Nature Conservancy. During John Harkness's time, magnificent American chestnut trees provided food, shelter, and shade to human and animal alike. Disease has since wiped out all but the hardiest of trees throughout their range in America. The Harkness Preserve still harbors a sparse but mature stand of American Chestnuts, one of the last two in Maine. A designated nature trail begins on Spruce Street and makes its way through the chestnuts, across two peaceful brooks, and to a magnificent overlook of Penobscot Bay from the shore of Rockport Harbor.

**Beech Hill:** 295 acres of blueberry fields owned and managed by the Coastal Mountains Land Trust with advice from the Maine Department of Agriculture. That arrangement rests on the collaborative funding of the Beech Hill purchase in 2001, which included money raised through donations and through the state's Land for Maine's Future Program.

With expansive views across Penobscot Bay and up to the Camden Hills Park, the 295-acre Beech Hill property provides opportunities for historic, agricultural and environmental education. The open fields offer the opportunity to continue the current organic blueberry farming operation and provide excellent habitat for some rare grassland bird species. The historic stone house on the summit, named "Beechnut," was built in the early 1900s and is of statewide significance. The property also has several miles of walking and cross-country ski trails for the public to enjoy.

**Georges River Highland Path and Ragged Mountain Trail:** Both are trails maintained by the Georges River Land Trust, a non-profit organization based in Rockland. The Ragged Mountain Trail is a 4.9-mile trail extending from Rt. 17 over Ragged Mountain to Thorndike Brook. The paths cross through the hills of the Georges River watershed, which crosses West Rockport. The watershed of the St. Georges River is a varied and beautiful region of the heartland of the midcoast. It covers 225 miles of wooded hills, blueberry barrens, family farms, small towns and rural villages. Fed by streams, ponds and wetlands, the river winds through the lowland 38 miles from its source near Frye Mountain to Port Clyde, where it empties into Muscongus Bay.

The 25 miles of hiking trails at different points of access lead through lowland forests, river bogs, open meadows, beside rushing streams, and over high ridges, to the more strenuous climbing; the summits of Ragged and Bald mountains. In addition to the hiking trails, there are bicycle and auto routes as well canoe and kayak launch areas.

**Sides Preserve:** 8.5 acres. Donated by Ginny and Andrew Sides, this preserve protects 1,400 feet of shoreline on Mace's Pond. The northern portion is a popular spot to launch a canoe or wet a fishing line. A quiet trail moves south through the interior woods of the preserve and towards the southern end of the pond. The wetland near the pond's outlet is a great spot to look for many species of waterfowl. The preserve is managed by the Coastal Mountains Land Trust.

### **PRIVATE FACILITIES**

Midcoast Recreation Center: On Route 90, "Mr. C's" offers indoor ice skating, ice hockey, tennis, and exercise classes. All programs are open to the public.

### **NON-PROFITS**

The Penobscot Bay Area YMCA (formerly Camden Area YMCA) built its new facility on Union Street in Rockport in 2002. It provides programs in aquatics, arts childrens program, health and fitness, music, and sports.

### **PATHWAYS EFFORT**

A joint Camden-Rockport Pathways committee has successfully built a pathway from the Camden/Rockport town line near the Penobscot Bay YMCA to Rockport Village along Union Street. The committee continues to research and recommend design and development of bike and pedestrian pathways with a goal of creating a network of pathways and is to develop a "Master Plan."

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Develop a long range plan, preferably on a regional basis, that outlines future recreation needs in terms of land and its use (including public access to saltwater and freshwater) and the mechanisms for funding its realization.
- Encourage development of bike/pedestrian pathways connecting parks and recreation areas to village and residential neighborhoods. Continue to participate actively in the Camden/Rockport Pathways Committee.
- Promote development of trails on existing corridors through lease, easement and land trusts to connect Rockport to neighboring towns.
- Encourage preservation of open space for use as community gardens, parks and playgrounds using impact fees (if appropriate), tax incentives and land acquisition funds.
- Restrict use of chemical herbicides and pesticides on playing fields used by children and where run-off affects water resources.
- Boating activities for children and adults should be supported and promoted, with particular encouragement for Rockport residents to take advantage of what the Rockport Boat Club offers.
- Establish an impact fee to help fund future recreation and park land needs.

# ROCKPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY

This section recommends strategies to ensure the future of a municipal library long recognized for outstanding collection and staff, as well as its progressive approach to community building.

The Rockport Public Library was established in 1914, when the YMCA, then located in the theatre part of the Rockport Opera House, made available its “box office” area and collection of 1,000 books as the nucleus of a town library. This collaboration with the YMCA continued until 1925 when the YMCA closed. The Opera House became the Town Hall; the Library was relocated to the lower level of the building.

In 1929, a Library Building Association was founded with a bequest of \$5,000. The association raised money in various ways: two concerts by students of the Curtis Institute of Music, a Chauffeur’s Ball, card parties, food sales and donations. Much of this money was lost in the wake of the Wall Street crash of 1929.

In 1943, Mary Louise Bok gave Rockport the Hotel and Burgess lots on the east and west sides of Limerock Street for a library site. By December 1949, the new library building was constructed at a cost of \$11,884, and with countless hours of volunteer support.

Room for expansion was left on either end of the building. In 1967, a nonfiction room was added to the Lily Pond Outlet side at a cost of about \$6,830. In 1977, the Eleanor Clark Apollonio Children’s Room was added not to the Limerock Street side of the building, as originally planned, but, because of zoning issues, to the front. This changed the entrance from Russell Avenue to Limerock Street. The cost of this project was \$20,974. A Town appropriation of \$3,418 for carpeting, bookshelves, painting and light fixtures was the first time any tax money was spent for library equipment.

In 1979 an Endowment Fund was created with proceeds of the sale of Eastman Johnson’s painting, “Sugaring Off at the Camp,” which had been given to the Library in 1953 by Clifford Smith.

### ***Friends of the Rockport Public Library***

The Friends of Rockport Public Library was established in 1979 with the purpose, as stated in its constitution and bylaws, “to develop and maintain public interest in the Rockport Public Library; to assist in developing and maintaining its service

and usefulness to the community; to encourage community support of the library by gifts, records, periodicals, money, personal services, and other resources; and to encourage the use of the library’s facilities in the intellectual and cultural enrichment of life in the Rockport community.” That year, the Friends took responsibility for the annual book sale. Since that time the book sale has raised more than \$76,000, which has been used exclusively for the benefit of the Library. There are currently about 200 Friends members.

In 1987 a renovation project installed a new heating system, created staff workspace and storage space in the attic, provided a handicapped accessible bathroom and added a handicapped accessible rear entrance. This project cost \$80,000, with \$8,800 contributed by the Town of Rockport and the rest raised from private donations.

A fourth building project in 1994-95 added the 24 x 30-foot Marjorie B. Dodge Room at the back of the library, expanded the Children’s Room and restored the Library’s front entrance, now made handicapped accessible, to its original Russell Avenue orientation. A fundraising campaign raised the \$180,000 needed for this project.

Computers were introduced at the Library in 1990 and became progressively more important in library operations. In 1996 free public Internet access was made possible through the Maine School and Library Network. In 2002 the Library automated its circulation and catalog as part of MINERVA, a statewide integrated library system created by the Maine Info Net Project. From the Library’s website, [www.rockport.lib.me.us](http://www.rockport.lib.me.us), it is possible to search Rockport’s catalog, the catalogs of the other 37 MINERVA libraries, and the catalogs of major libraries and library systems across the state that are part of Maine Info Net. Cardholders can also view their current borrowing records and renew materials online.

Patron initiated interlibrary loan requesting may be implemented as soon as 2003. Borrowers will be able directly to request materials from Maine Info Net libraries; the system will route the requested books to the Rockport Public Library for pickup.



This innovation will greatly facilitate interlibrary loan requesting, which can now be done only through library staff. Expanded availability of interlibrary loan will greatly increase the number of books available to Rockport cardholders. In 1914, cardholders had direct access to 1,000 titles; by 2002, the collection had grown to 28,000; in the near future, with the implementation of patron initiated interlibrary loan, borrowers will have convenient, direct access to the statewide union catalog of 2.5 million items.

## *Funding*

Funding for the Rockport Public Library comes from a variety of sources:

1. The Town of Rockport pays staff salaries and benefits and audit expenses. This represents 66% of the annual operating budget.
2. Income from the Endowment Fund, currently managed by FL Putnam Investment Management Company in accord with state statutes, accounts for approximately 17% of the operating budget.
3. Restricted and unrestricted gifts; desk income, including nonresident fees and overdue fines; and State aid account for the remaining 17% of the operating budget.

Both (2) and (3) are administered by the elected Library Committee.

## *State standings*

According to FY 2001 statistics, the most recent available from the Maine State Library, Rockport Public Library's performance ranks near the top of the 64 libraries serving communities of 2,500 to 4,999.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> in annual circulation (62,535)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> in circulation per capita (19.49)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> in weekly hours open (53.5)
- 1<sup>st</sup> in annual expenditures for collection (\$37,003)

Annual circulation is the best single indicator of a library's activity. According to FY 2001 statistics, of the 12 Maine libraries with annual circulations of 50,000 to 70,000, Rockport accomplishes its work with a comparatively small building and small staff.

- 4<sup>th</sup> of 12 in annual circulation; **62,535**; average: 60,368
- 2<sup>nd</sup> in annual turnover (the average number of times per year a book is checked out): **2.31**; average: 1.78
- 9<sup>th</sup> of 12 in space in existing building: **3,324 sq. ft.**; average: 8,017
- 11<sup>th</sup> in FTE's (full time equivalent staffing): **2.63**; average 6. [The addition of a fulltime position in FY02 brought Rockport's FTE's to 3.2, still about the half the average for a library with this level of circulation activity.]

## *Space needs*

Rockport Public Library is fast running out of shelf space. By 2005, according to an estimate by Library Director Sally Regan, *it will be necessary to remove one book from the collection for every book that is added*. Lack of shelf space has already forced the Library to cut back subscriptions to current magazines.

Insufficiency of on-site programming space, especially for children's programs, is also felt. Pre-school story times are often very crowded. Some types of children's programs cannot be scheduled due to lack of space. Although the Meeting Room of the Opera House is available, holding children's programs there does not serve a major goal of programming—bringing people into the library so that they will become familiar with its resources and become library users.

Community members frequently ask for a small meeting area where a few individuals could meet or a teacher could tutor a student. Since the building is so small, such meetings inconvenience other library users. This use is currently kept to a minimum.

The number of computers available for public use is also limited by insufficient floor space. Currently, for the public the library has two OPAC (online public access catalog) computers and three Internet-accessible computers. Even as technological advances bring wireless access, smaller equipment and more home use, the public continues to use the Library for Internet services. More floor space could provide computer access areas in the children's room and computer instruction and tutoring areas for the general public.

### *Parking*

Library users frequently remark on the need for more parking. When the Center for Maine Contemporary Art or the Rockport Opera House have

public programs during library hours, people often cannot find a place to park at all.

More parking convenient to the building is particularly needed. Especially disadvantaged by the current shortage are two groups of prime library users: people of retirement age who have some degree of mobility problem and parents with babies or toddlers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maximize availability of books and other lending materials to Rockport residents by supporting increased interlibrary loan services. Increases in staffing and delivery costs may be involved.
- Address long-term needs for increased shelf space, programming space, computer work space and parking by weighing cost and benefits of:
  - a) Expanding the library building and creating more parking at its current historic location in Rockport Village. The present building is widely admired for its architecture and landscaping. Zoning and traffic issues will need to be addressed.
  - b) Constructing a new facility on one of Rockport's major routes. In a larger, more centrally located, conveniently accessible public space, Rockport residents could meet, interact and build the bonds of community.



# POLICE & FIRE PROTECTION

This section recommends strategies for strengthening Rockport's police and fire protection services.

## *Police Department*

Rockport's Police Department has maintained its respectable reputation in the community, and while it has grown over the past 17 years from three to seven officers, it manages to retain its small-town accessibility.

The annual average number of calls for service has increased five to eight percent each year for the past decade. This can be attributed to a number of factors: the increase of population; the changing expectations of the community; an increase of traffic on Rockport roads and three major highways that cross through Rockport; and the addition of a large regional high school, with its own resource officer, and the new Penobscot Bay Area YMCA, on Union Street.

In 1996, the department responded to 1,812 incidents. In 2002, the department responded to 2,965 incidents, representing a 63.6 percent increase over a six-year period. This also reflects a shift to a computer-aided dispatch system shared by other towns in Knox County and the District Attorney's office in recording complaints.

Incidents can range from 911 hangups to violation of bail conditions to stray animals to theft and homicide.

The police department grew to three officers in 1986 and again to the current staff of six officers and one chief of police. In 1996, the police officers became a full-time workforce, creating what the town regarded as a more proficient police department.

In 2003, the police department staff included a chief of police, administrative assistant, patrol sergeant, four patrol officers, and one patrol officer/school resource officer.

By contrast, Camden has a population of 5,209 and a police force of 11. Rockland has a population of 7,800 with a police force of 21.

## *Knox County Sheriff's Department*

Rockport pays annual taxes to Knox County, and a portion of those taxes help fund the Knox County Sheriff's Department. The 2002 budget for the sheriff's department was \$950,000. Of that, Rockport paid \$115,118. That money covered just sheriff department operations. Rockport paid additional taxes to the county for jail, court, and dispatch services.

Rockport is a member of the Knox County Law Enforcement Task Force, which includes representatives from area towns. Rockport, along with Camden, Rockland, and Thomaston (towns with their own police departments), are all seeking credits from the county because their draw on the Knox County Sheriff Department is minimal.

As of 2003, Rockport was seeking a \$28,779 credit from the county commissioners.

## *Public Opinion*

Of the residents responding to the Comprehensive Plan Committee survey in 2002, 37.4 percent rated Rockport police protection and services as "excellent" and 50.5 percent rated them as "good." Just 9.8 percent rated them as "fair," and 2.4 percent rated them as "poor."

In the same survey, residents recognized that the sharing of services among neighboring jurisdictions and regionalization can be cost-effective, and represent ways to make better use of scarce resources, especially resources that must be staffed and equipped to meet immediate demands, such as public safety.

Rockport survey respondents were generally interested in the potential for shared community services. Sharing police and fire protection and public works services was "strongly favored" by 43 to 46 percent of the respondents and somewhat favored by another quarter of the respondents. Opposition to shared services was 31 percent (for shared police services).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As Rockport further explores expanding its regional collaborations, primarily in order to trim costs, there have been some initial discussions about sharing some aspects of public protection with neighboring communities. This is a topic covered in the Regionalism Section of this comprehensive plan on page 37. It is also a concept currently championed by Governor John Baldacci as the state looks for more fiscal savings at the municipal level.

Combined with the projected population growth of another 482 people in Rockport by 2015, this committee recommends:

- That an independent study is conducted by Rockport, adjacent towns (for example, with Camden), and the county to study existing police protection service and explore more shared police protection services, with the interest of fiscal savings as the basis of the study.

# SEWER & WATER

This section makes recommendations to extend or upgrade public infrastructure to support business growth in appropriate zoning districts and residential growth in the villages.

Wastewater disposal and drinking water infrastructure extends to a limited number of areas of town, the Rockport Village and Glen Cove, primarily in response to environmental concerns expressed by DEP in the case of Rockport Village and the demands of Penobscot Bay Medical Center in the case of Glen Cove.

Rockport entered into two interlocal sewer agreements, one with Rockland in 1988, the other with Camden in 1990. Camden agreed to take Rockport's sewage providing Rockport constructs, operates, and maintains its facilities in Rockport. Camden guaranteed Rockport that its treatment plant would accommodate a monthly average rate of 150,000 gallons per day, provided it is in an acceptable state.

Rockland agreed to take up to 70,000 gallons per day from the Samoset Resort in Rockport, and an average of 100,000 gallons per day from Rockport.

Two extensions to the original Rockport-Camden systems were recently completed, each spurred on by specific users, first the relocation of the regional high school to Route 90, and the second to provide service to Camden National Bank's operation's center and State of Maine Cheese's manufacturing facility along Route 1. With these two extensions future infrastructure development is more feasible in Rockport's growth zones along Route One and Route 90.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct engineering feasibility studies and impact analyses of extending wastewater infrastructure along Route 1, connecting the two systems; and to West Rockport, enabling the development of viable inland villages.
- Conduct engineering feasibility studies and impact analyses of establishing a stand-alone community wastewater disposal system in Rockville.
- Coordinate the extension and/or upgrade of wastewater and drinking water infrastructures.
- Extend wastewater infrastructure along Route 1, connecting both systems to encourage business growth in the business zones and allow Rockport to negotiate the best terms between the City of Rockland and the Town of Camden.
- Extend wastewater infrastructure to West Rockport to allow for business and residential development in the designated business zones and village zone.
- Use all available tools, grant opportunities, and financing mechanisms to lessen the burden on the municipal government and users.
- Restrict expansion of wastewater infrastructure to village, business/residential, and business districts.

## *Implementation Plan: Sewer & Water*

<b>It is the town's policy to:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Expand infrastructure into designated village growth areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete feasibility study for waster water infrastructure expansion into outlying village areas of town</li> <li>• Extend wastewater infrastructure to outlying villages if proven feasible and cost effective</li> <li>• Link Camden wastewater treatment line with Rockland wastewater treatment line</li> </ul>	Town Manager and Selectmen	June 31, 2005
Reduce the impact of development on the landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft ordinance requiring all new development be required to put utilities underground</li> </ul>	Ordinance Review Committee	September 31, 2004
Assess and adapt existing ordinances to changing development goals of the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modify existing sewer ordinance to reflect outcome of the feasibility study and growth patterns</li> </ul>	Ordinance Review Committee	November 30, 2005
Expand housing development guidelines		Ordinance Review Committee	November 2004

# HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section recommends strategies for enhancing Rockport's historical record, while recognizing that many Rockport residents have, for many years, already worked countless volunteer hours to create rich historical resources and inventory.

For a concise history of Rockport, see the Rockport Comprehensive Plan Book II on page 4.



Through the efforts of many caring citizens and the Camden-Rockport Historical Society, Rockport's more recent — over the last several centuries — historical heritage is well researched and preserved. The emphasis has been on Rockport Village, the more densely populated area of town since the mid-1700s and where industry has thrived most prominently.

### ***Rockport Historic District***

Rockport's stately homes and buildings contribute to the character of the town. In 1976, 127 homes and buildings standing in close proximity to one another on 12 streets in Rockport Village became part of the National Register of Historic Places Inventory. This Rockport Historic District runs in an irregular pattern along Pascal Avenue from Russell, Union, and Winter streets on north to School Street. The area comprises approximately 700 acres and is noted for architectural styles of Greek Revival, Italianate, and others. The periods of significance include the years of 1850 to 1899.

The composition of the district reflects Rockport's greatest period of development as a mid-19th Century coastal town. The scales, proportions, materials, color, and design quality of the structures are in harmony throughout the district.

Historic district designation, while recognizing the fine architecture in the area, does not provide for its preservation or prevent it from being inconsistently altered. Nor does it protect against conflicts of use. Houses marked with the oval, black-cast aluminum marker with raised gold-leaved numbers have met the following criteria: The house is at least 75 years-old; the structure retains its original appearance, and has been kept in good repair with no significant alteration.

Some of the plaques have been painted green, indicating some alteration to the original building.

### ***Other Designations in Rockport***

Also listed on by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the National Register of Historic Places are:

**ROCKPORT HISTORIC KILN AREA.** Also

known as Rockland-Rockport Lime Company and Merriam & Shepherd Lime Company at the Rockport Marine Park. This site includes seven structures and sits on 70 acres. Period of significance include the years from 1800 to 1874.

**HISTORIC OLD CONWAY HOMESTEAD AND MUSEUM.** Conway Farm House (ca 1770). Restored 1962, the Conway house is the location of the Camden-Rockport Historical Society.

**INDIAN ISLAND LIGHT STATION,** Indian Island, Rockport Harbor. This site includes three buildings and one structure.

The site is also on the National Park Service Inventory of Historic Light Stations. The station was established in 1850, was lit first in 1874, and deactivated in 1934. The periods of significance were 1850-1874, 1875-1899, 1900-1924, and 1925-1949.

*Timberwind* schooner, Rockport Harbor.

**MEGUNTICOOK GOLF CLUB,** Calderwood Lane. The golf club comprises 661 acres, and one building. Periods of significance were 1900 to 1949.

**SPITE HOUSE,** Deadman Point.

**TILLSON FARM BARN,** Warrenton Road, Glen Cove.

### ***Historic Archeological Sites***

Historic Archeological Sites recorded by the Maine State Historic Preservation Commission include six maritime wrecks: the *Woodbury M. Snow*, schooner; *Hastings*, schooner; *Zone*, brig; *Cepola*, Canadian wreck; *Daring*, Canadian schooner; and the *Mary A.*, Canadian schooner.

The six are in need of further survey, inventory, and analysis. Additionally, the commission said: "No professional survey for historic archeological sites has been conducted to date in Rockport.

Future such fieldwork could focus on sites relating to the earliest European settlement of the town, beginning as early as 1770.”

### ***Prehistoric Archeological Sites***

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission also points out the existence of a series of inland and coastal prehistoric archeologic sites in Rockport. The coastal sites are along Brewster Point, north of the Rockland Breakwater, along Clam Cove below Pine Hill (where Penobscot Bay Medical Center is), in an area that stretches from Oakland Park to the outlet of Varmah Brook, and along Beauchamp Point.

Inland areas include the area along the Goose River stretching from Simonton Corners to Route 1, the entire shorefront of Grassy Pond, the north-west shorefront of Mirror Lake, and a good por-

tion of the Chickawaukie Lake perimeter.

Reports of these prehistoric sites date back from the 1980s to the 1920s, and include artifact collections, the discovery of a possible cave along the side of Bald Mountain, and the siting of stone tools used by Native Americans prior to the arrival of Columbus. However, the state has little more information about these areas and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission recommends the need for further professional archeological surveys, inventory, and analyses in the aforementioned areas, along the Penobscot Bay shoreline, and along the Goose River.

See Book II of this Comprehensive Plan for the state maps that outline these areas. None of the sites are well-known and an archeological survey would be required for more details.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Establish an ad-hoc committee of interested citizens who will inventory Rockport’s historical and archeological sites, and identify those sites that have not yet been, or possibly could be, included in the state and federal registry of historic places. This committee could work in conjunction with the Rockport Conservation Commission as it inventories the town’s scenic areas, historic and cultural sites, and viewsheds from the roads and highways (see page 102 in the Transportation Section).
- Explore the creation of an archaeological resource potential overlay district and review standards. The standards should be included in the town’s subdivision and site plan ordinances for excavation, construction, rehabilitation, and reconstruction that occurs in the district. The standards could require an applicant developing or excavating property within the area mapped as archaeological resource potential by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to submit with the permit application assurances that the proposed development activity will not harm any significant archaeological resources. Those assurances can take the form of a letter from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission or a professional archaeologist approved by the commission stating that the project will have no affect on a significant archaeological site.



# *Education*

# EDUCATION

This section recommends strategies for promoting a stronger public school education for students in Kindergarten through Grade Twelve in the public schools.

The intent of this section is to:

- Provide an overview of schools that educate Rockport and surrounding communities, their past and anticipated populations, and the change in costs that impact Rockport's property taxes.
- Offer recommendations for future planning.

It would be irresponsible to ignore the impact of school costs on the Town of Rockport. The Comprehensive Plan and the citizens need to pay attention to the schools and their budgets, and Rockport residents need to address issues such as unfunded mandates.

## EDUCATION

Rockport grew into an educational hub for the midcoast during the decade of the 1990s, with the expansion of established schools and the construction of new schools. With all that came the creation of additional jobs, as well as new educational opportunities for a population that ranges from preschoolers to the elderly.

With the construction of the Camden Hills Regional High School in 1999 on Route 90, and the relocation of two independent schools, the Waldorf Ashwood and the Children's House Montessori schools in that same vicinity just a few years earlier, Rockport's roads got busier with students arriving and leaving school. Additionally, the high school, with its large auditorium, gymnasium, and conference amenities, created a community center where concerts, theater, lectures, courses, and sporting events are held year-round.

The high school also sponsors adult education and provides, with the University of Maine, college-level curriculum. The Rockport College and Maine Photographic Workshops, in Rockport Village, also draw college-age and adults from all over the globe to their programs.

Currently, there are approximately 2,000 students attending an educational institution in Rockport. Those schools include:

Rockport Elementary School (public, K-4), West Street

Camden Hills Regional High School (public, 9-12), Route 90

Ashwood Waldorf School (independent, K-8), Park Street

Children's House Montessori School (independent, K-6), Route 90

Riley School (independent, K-8), Warrenton Street, Glen Cove)

Harbor Schools (group home, run by the private Harbor Schools and under the purview of the Maine Department of Human Services, 4-12), Route 17

Rockport College, Rockport Village

Maine Photographic Workshops, Rockport Village

Center for Furniture Craftsmanship: In May 2003, the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship described its expansion plans that included the addition of three new buildings to its campus on Route 90. The Center saw 272 students from 38 states pass through its doors in 2002. The school also had 30 visiting instructors. State officials called the school an exemplification of Maine's emerging "creative economy."

Collectively, the schools based in Rockport have provided approximately 330 jobs, according to 2001 figures.

While the public schools have the greatest fiscal influence on Rockport, all the schools influence the Rockport community with their presence. This can range from a draw on public services, such as fire, police, ambulance, and public works, to the creation of local jobs and opportunities, as well as the recognition that Rockport is invigorated by the creative and productive energy of younger generations.

## Public School System

Rockport participates in two public school systems, which are noted for their academic quality and achievements. These schools, in fact, have drawn new residents to Rockport over the past decade. The two systems are:

- School Administrative District 28 (SAD 28), which governs grades K-8 and consists of Camden and Rockport
- Five-Town Community School District (CSD), which governs high school and adult education. It consists of Appleton, Camden, Hope, Lincolnville, and Rockport.

The CSD and SAD 28 each operate under their own governing boards to which representatives are elected annually from each town for a three-year

term. Rockport and Camden board members who serve on the SAD 28 board automatically serve as members of, or alternates to, the CSD board.

The CSD and SAD 28 are managed by a superintendent, assistant superintendent, and support staff at a central office in Camden. SAD 28 and the CSD boards produce their own annual budgets, which are then considered by town voters. When the SAD was formed, Camden and Rockport agreed to share costs based on the valuation per student. As both towns face increased valuation, each student costs more. The CSD per-student apportionment is figured differently.

The 2002-2003 school budgets that were approved by voters in June 2002 were:

- SAD 28 \$8,722,282
- CSD \$9,366,646

The following table outlines the past four years of the SAD 28 and CSD budgets. The table also shows the Rockport share of those budgets. These figures represent operating costs only, not debt service or transportation costs.

### **Five Town CSD**

	<b><u>1999-2000</u></b>	<b><u>2000-2001</u></b>	<b><u>2001-2002</u></b>	<b><u>2002-2003</u></b>
Budget Total	\$ 6,238,972.00	\$ 7,256,355.49	\$ 7,901,075.36	\$ 9,366,646.26
Rockport Share	\$ 1,421,008.41	\$ 1,487,608.98	\$ 1,658,788.85	\$ 1,768,630.68

### **MSAD #28**

	<b><u>1999-2000</u></b>	<b><u>2000-2001</u></b>	<b><u>2001-2002</u></b>	<b><u>2002-2003</u></b>
Budget Total	\$ 7,529,420.00	\$ 7,160,063.33	\$ 7,734,405.00	\$ 8,722,282.00
Rockport Share	\$ 2,394,895.32	\$ 2,585,689.00	\$ 2,849,038.00	\$ 2,960,098.00

### **Combined**

	<b><u>1999-2000</u></b>	<b><u>2000-2001</u></b>	<b><u>2001-2002</u></b>	<b><u>2002-2003</u></b>
Budget Total	\$ 13,768,392.00	\$ 14,416,418.82	\$ 15,635,480.36	\$ 18,088,928.26
Rockport Share	\$ 3,815,903.73	\$ 4,073,297.98	\$ 4,507,826.85	\$ 4,728,728.68

The SAD 28 grade K-8 per pupil expenditure in 2001 was \$5,478; the state average was \$4,595.

The Five Town CSD grade 9-12 per pupil expenditure was \$5,928; the state average was \$5,732.

# EDUCATION

## Five Town CSD/ MSAD #28 10 Year Enrollment History

Grade	1992-1993	1993-1994	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
<b>K</b>	77	84	85	83	79	64	75	94	80	92	79
<b>1</b>	95	82	96	92	85	76	74	80	103	83	85
<b>2</b>	87	93	85	93	101	86	78	75	88	102	86
<b>3</b>	101	88	107	87	89	97	88	94	75	91	108
<b>4</b>	109	106	98	114	89	90	100	102	98	80	97
	<b>469</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>455</b>
<b>5</b>	101	105	107	92	113	90	90	101	109	106	81
<b>6</b>	119	109	107	113	99	111	95	88	97	108	104
<b>7</b>	90	121	114	107	104	101	123	89	95	103	115
<b>8</b>	91	95	120	109	107	100	100	117	96	97	107
	<b>401</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>407</b>
<b>9</b>	147	141	182	158	161	174	140	197	208	174	189
<b>10</b>	133	131	136	175	170	147	171	145	185	199	172
<b>11</b>	151	130	121	142	120	169	136	150	130	167	190
<b>12</b>	102	140	123	111	106	122	168	123	142	124	173
	<b>533</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>724</b>
	<b>1403</b>	<b>1425</b>	<b>1481</b>	<b>1476</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>1427</b>	<b>1438</b>	<b>1455</b>	<b>1506</b>	<b>1526</b>	<b>1586</b>



## SAD 28

SAD 28 serves children in Kindergarten to eighth grade at three schools: Rockport Elementary School (1-4), in Rockport; Elm Street School (Kindergarten), Camden; and the Camden-Rockport Middle School (5-8), in Camden.

As of October 1, 2002, there were 849 students enrolled in SAD 28, 388 from Rockport, 462 from Camden, and one from Warren, Lincolnville, and Rockland, respectively. There were 460 students enrolled in K-4 schools, approximately 360 of whom attend school at Rockport Elementary School (RES) in Rockport.

In the fall of 2003, the number of students enrolled at Rockport Elementary School swelled to 490. Of those 30 new students, more than 16 were previously enrolled in local private schools. The others came from all over the country, as well as in-state.

At the Camden-Rockport Middle School, students also arrived from local private schools, as well as from out-of-state and out-of-country.

Trends indicate that for the period of 1996-2000, 92 new students arrived and 101 left. For the period of 2001-2003, 123 new students arrived and 81 left, representing an annual average growth over the three year period of 14 new students per year.

## SAD 28 Facilities

After getting its new high school built in 1999, Camden and Rockport turned its attention back to its K-8 facilities and determined that all four schools – RES, Elm Street, Mary E. Taylor Middle School (MET), and the old Camden-Rockport High School, now relegated to grades 7-8, were all in need of some level of renovation and repair. Various bond proposals were floated to the school board, ranging from \$2 million to \$7 million to address problems plaguing the schools. In 2000, Camden and Rockport voters approved a \$1.8 million bond proposal that was spent on renovations, mostly at the Camden-Rockport Middle School site (the old high school and MET).

While struggling to determine how to upgrade its schools, and whether to close its historic Elm Street School, the school board also submit-

ted, in 2001, an application to the state for the funding of a new K-4 school. Subsequently placing 15 on the list of possible recipients for new school funding, the school board created subcommittees to analyze different approaches to solving its facilities issues. As of early 2003, those committees were working on a series of tasks, which included determining whether to keep Elm Street School open; repair, renovate, or demolish and replace RES; and identify suitable land in Camden or Rockport on which to construct a new school.

In 2001, SAD 28 also commissioned a school population projection from Planning Decisions, Inc., in South Portland. The study was to assist the school department in creating long-range plans. The report's "best fit" model projected that total K-8 enrollments through 2011 would range between 827 and 867 students.

Some of the "School Enrollment Projections: SAD 28" are:

- The average enrollment of students in first grade in SAD 28 through Year 2011 will be 80.
- The total number of students in K-4 will range from 461 (2002-2003) to 433 (2011).
- Middle-school enrollment will range from 116 in 2004 to 133 in 2008 to 94 in 2011.

According to the report, both Knox and Waldo counties will expect an increase in population and by 2020, there will be a 20.8 percent increase in population to 91,707 people. However, the rate of growth in the 0-14 age category will be lower than expected and most of the projected growth will be among adults, not children.

"The population of SAD 28 who are under 18 years of age was 1,772 in 1990. By 2000, that figure increased by .8 percent to 1,787, a gain of 15 children. This increase in the under-18 population was driven by an increase of 62 children in Rockport whereas Camden had a loss of 47 children from 1990 to 2000. This increase in the under-18 population was lower than what occurred for the total population in SAD 28, meaning that the population of people under 18 increased at a slower rate than the

total population. When we look at Knox County, the population of people under 18 remained constant and the State of Maine declined by 2.5 percent. Therefore, SAD 28's under-18 population increased slightly while Knox County remained unchanged and the State of Maine declined," the report says.

The report concludes that based on housing trends (Camden has seen for the past six years an annual average of 20 new units per year, and Rockport saw 24 per year), "future residential development in SAD 28 will remain at or near the

three-year average of 45 new units added annually."

Calculating the number of births to community residents, plus figuring the housing trends along with in-migration of children, the report projects that:

- housing unit development will continue on its current course;
- in-migration needs to be closely monitored to see if the increase of new children moving to the area continues, as was exhibited in 1999 and 2000.

### *Community School District*

As of January 2003, there were 724 students at the high school. Below is a breakdown of how many students attend from each town.

Appleton .....	73
Camden .....	276
Hope .....	76
Lincolntown .....	118
Rockport .....	181

In 1995 the towns of Appleton, Camden, Hope, Lincolntown, and Rockport voted to form the CSD. In addition, the communities voted to approve a local cost sharing formula that had been developed by a cost sharing committee. The communities also voted to build a new high school, Camden Hills Regional High School, with an eventual price tag of \$27 million by the time it reached completion in 2000.

To date, the state has contributed \$1.6 million,

and should continue to provide a significant portion of the remaining debt service costs.

Private fundraising through the Friends of the CSD raised another \$7.2 million to the project. The Friends of the CSD paid the interim local financing portion of the 20-year bonds, thus allowing the new high school to be constructed 30 months ahead of the normal state schedule. The Five Town CSD was the first Maine school system to use this new law, which saved the state and towns thousands of dollars in construction inflation costs.

Currently, Rockport's debt load for the construction of the new high school is \$5.7 million without the state's contribution, but is expected to be \$1.3 million over the course of 20 years after the state's contribution. That breaks down to approximately \$69,256 annually that Rockport will pay over a 20-year span for the new high school.

## EDUCATION

Rockport's share of the current debt of both budgets (before state contributions) is as follows.

### **FIVE TOWN CSD / MSAD #28 LONG TERM DEBT ROCKPORT SHARE**

#### **FIVE TOWN CSD DEBT**

<u>Original Amount</u>	<u>Principal Remaining</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Rockport Share</u>
\$ 18,828,816.00	\$ 18,828,816.00	New High School	\$ 5,761,617.70

#### **MSAD #28 DEBT**

<u>Original Amount</u>	<u>Principal Remaining</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Rockport Share</u>
\$ 912,930.00	\$ 182,586.00	Renovation of Schools	\$ 74,860.26
\$ 650,000.00	\$ 325,000.00	Bus Barn	\$ 133,250.00
\$ 1,800,000.00	\$ 1,680,000.00	Knowlton St Renovation	\$ 688,800.00

**Rockport Share of Debt      \$ 6,658,527.96**

### ***Transportation***

The majority of students are transported by bus to the school, although there are approximately 150 students driving to school each day in their own cars. A survey circulated by the Camden-Rockport

Pathways Committee in early 2003 to the entire school body (568 student surveys were returned) and faculty indicated, however, that 303 students arrive by car each day to school.

### ***School Resource Officer***

The high school falls under the jurisdiction of the Rockport Police Department, and through an arrangement with Rockport, a police officer, referred to as the school resource officer, maintains a daily presence at the school while it is in session. During the summer, the officer works as part of the Rockport PD.

This arrangement of 75 / 25 percent is funded

primarily through a U.S. Department of Justice "Cops in School" grant that runs through 2004. At that point, the CSD and the Town of Rockport will decide whether to continue funding the position. If so, the fiscal arrangement will have Rockport paying 25 percent (\$13,385) of the \$52,631 position and the CSD funding the remaining 75 percent (\$39,245).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *New School Siting*

One of the most important factors in siting new school facilities is location, which needs to complement the planned growth of the community. Because a school is both the heart of the community and a center of education, its location affects all citizens. The proper site location of a school contributes to a sense of community for its students, promotes efficient use of transportation alternatives, and enhances the community's development.

The Maine State Planning Office and the Maine Department of Education lists guidelines (see appendix) for districts to follow in determining site location of new schools. Creativity and flexibility are integral to the guidelines, which include:

- 1) Consider renovation or expansion in a central location
- 2) Follow the guidance and vision articulated in a community's comprehensive plan
- 3) Site ancillary facilities, such as playing fields, creatively. Don't give up a good site because it's too small for the entire project.
- 4) Select a site where students can walk or cycle to school. Avoid sites that are only accessible by car or school bus, which can increase costs.
- 5) Use existing services and facilities to save money. Select a site served by good roads, existing sewer system, three-phase power, nearby fire station, and other essential services.

Site design is also important and the state recommends that the design avoids building in wetlands and fragmenting wildlife habitats.

- This plan recommends that Rockport's schools be sited and maintained within Rockport's villages. If a new school is considered for construction in Rockport, that school siting process will emphasize the need for alternative and safe modes of transportation for children, and that walking and biking to school be facilitated as healthy alternatives to the use of cars.

### *Professional Grant Writing Assistance*

Rockport, and its surrounding communities, can benefit from collaborative grant-writing ventures that result in funding from other sources besides local taxpayers. Those grants can enhance school activities without over-burdening Rockport taxpayers.

- This plan recommends that professional grant writing skills of the town be made available to teachers and administration in order to encourage fundraising for school activities. Highest priority will be given for budget relief, rather than new program creation.

### *Endowments*

Public schools can benefit from endowments, and this plan encourages:

- exploring the feasibility of raising and promoting endowments. The public schools could be among the beneficiaries of such town administered endowments. Highest priority should be given for budget relief, rather than new program creation.

### ***Regional***

- Encourage regional cost saving measures such as the pooled purchasing of equipment and supplies as well as the possible merging of administrative activities. Like any large institution or corporation, the CSD and SAD 28 have opportunities for saving money by collaborations with other schools, school systems, and municipalities.

### ***School Board/Rockport Selectmen Collaboration***

- Schedule quarterly school board and selectmen meetings to explore mutually beneficial cost saving strategies and other ongoing issues.

### ***Impact Fees and Schools***

Impact fees can provide the town, and the school, with capital investment funds (See Financial Programs Section on page 26 for information about impact fees). With the adoption of impact fees, the town and school boards can consider using the proceeds to support school capital expenditures.

### ***Annual Reports***

- Require school boards to submit an annual report at the same time of the town's annual report to provide more visibility to cost and performance figures.

### ***Meetings***

- Request school boards to scheduled committee meetings to more convenient times to encourage more participation.